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Manufacturing consent through integration: Social networks of German journalists in the elite milieu and their effects on coverage

Abstract:

Most of the previous research concerning the interaction between journalists and their elite sources was done by questioning the players, the results being anonymized. This study has chosen a different methodological approach in order to pinpoint any possible influence by elite sources on journalistic content. Firstly, an analysis of the social networks focuses on the social environment of German journalists, in particular that of four senior foreign policy editors with the leading newspapers *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Welt* and *Die Zeit*. These were involved in a number of associations, think tanks and policy planning groups having ties with the German federal government, the USA and NATO where they potentially had contact with national and international political and business elites. Following this, a frame analysis shows that the output of the four journalists on the controversial issues of the definition of security ('extended security concept') and of deployments of the German army abroad (especially in Afghanistan) follows the same line as that of the identified peer groups. Finally, implications of this coincidence are discussed.

Keywords:

sourcing, informal interactions, social network analysis, frame analysis, journalistic independence

1 Introduction

In the winter of 1861, the number one topic among the London public was the American Civil War. Britain supported the secessionist southern states and equipped their ships. When a warship from the North boarded an unarmed British mail ship in neutral waters and arrested two ambassadors from the South who were on board, British national pride flared up. Virtually all classes of society called for war against Washington. By contrast, the leading newspapers urged mitigation.

Shortly afterwards popular war fever abated, whereas in the newspapers it rose – and, simultaneously, the British government imposed a ban on exports to the USA, and Prime Minister Henry Palmerston threatened to cut off diplomatic relations and declare war. The editors of the Viennese newspaper *Die Presse* asked their freelancer in London, the exile Karl Marx, why the press did not reflect public opinion. In an article dated 25th of December 1861, he explained the phenomenon by means of a kind of network analysis:

> 'But have a look at the London press! The leading newspaper is 'The Times', whose chief editor, *Bob Lowe* (...) is a subordinate member of the Cabinet, a kind of education minister and a pure creature of Palmerston. (...) One senior editor of 'Punch' was put up by Palmerston on the Board of Health, receiving £1,000 sterling annually. The Morning Post is partially owned by Palmerston himself. (...) The 'Morning Adviser' is owned by the Licensed Victuallers, that is, the public houses, which besides beer are also licensed to sell spirits. (...) The editor of that newspaper, Mr. *Grant*, (...) has had the honour of being invited to Palmerston's private soirées. (...) Added to this is the fact that the pious patrons of this gin-soaked journal are under the command of the Earl of Shaftesbury and that Shaftesbury is Palmerston's son-in-law.' (Marx 1972, 431; emphasis in original)

After describing personal or financial ties of eight further newspapers to the government, Marx sums up: 'On the whole, the London press – with the exception of the cotton organs the provincial newspapers form a laudable contrast – represents nothing but Palmerston and Palmerston again.' (*ibid.*, 433)

Between Britain in the nineteenth century and Germany at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there are significant differences regarding media ownership and journalistic culture. Nevertheless, some case studies suggest that in a very similar way, Germany's leading media currently side with the elite on topics of foreign policy whenever a different climate of opinion predominates among the general population, i.e., when there is an 'elite-mass gap'. For example, it was found that in media debates on the war in Kosovo (Eilders/Lüter 2000) and in Afghanistan (Pohr 2005), a critical counterpublic was almost non-existent. In a comparative study of the wars in Iraq in 2003, in Afghanistan in 2001 and in Kosovo in 1999, Maurer et al (2008, 161) found that German TV reporting 'constantly reflects the positions of the *national government policy* on these crises or wars' (emphasis in original). In a study of the media debate on the eastward expansion of the EU from 2000-2002, in which a consensual German elite contrasted with a split popular opinion, Adam (2008, 138) came to the conclusion that the two leading newspapers *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 'largely followed the agenda-setting and framing of the national elite'.

This can be explained either by theoretical approaches such as Bennett's Indexing hypothesis (1990) and the Propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky (2002). Both postulate that as a general rule, the major media tend to reflect the discourse of the political elite but do not question their premises; and that criticism in the media is mostly about tactical-performative details of policy and not about fundamental legitimation of policy (cf. also Mermin 1999: 9). Or one can ask – like Marx in the article cited above – for interpersonal ties between journalists and the elite that may lead to loyalties and 'cognitive co-optation' (Rinke et al. 2006: 91): Journalists may unconsciously adopt the political frames and views of political and economic leaders which they associate with, and they may censor themselves because they consider the interests of their partners/sources within the elites. In other words: It is reasonable to expect a correlation between personal networks of a journalist within the elite and the arguments in his journalistic output.

2 Informal interactions between journalists and the elite

In previous reseach, the informal interactions between journalists and the political elite were most studied by questioning the actors, with the results being anonymized (Baugut/Grundler 2010; Wenzler 2009; Lesmeister 2008; Hoffmann 2003). The findings were rather general statements: The relationship between journalists and politicians is to characterise as a symbiosis in which information is exchanged for publicity; behind the scenes permanent confidential interactions take place, both in larger or smaller background circles and in one-to-one conversations. Much more is not possible using the method of anonymized interviews. By contrast, social network analysis (SNA) using real names can obtain substantially more concrete and more relevant results. Journalists and their sources can be construed as networks, and these networks can be visualised. As pioneers in this field, Rinke et al. (2006) interviewed reporters on a controversial socio-political issue about their sources and showed these links to be an (anonymized) network that was tightly closed and centralized (*ibid.*, 68ff).

This study follows through upon the conclusions of the research discussed above, that on foreign policy issues the German media frequently follow the view of the elite, and

focuses on the social networks of four leading German foreign policy journalists (using social network analysis), as well as on their journalistic output (using frame analysis).

3 Design of the social network analysis

The social network analysis focused contacts of the German journalistic elite with political or business elites beyond their direct journalistic obligations (such as journalistic research or interviews). I looked for German, foreign or international organizations (associations, think tanks, policy-planning groups, foundations, non-public conferences) where at least one member of the journalistic elite and at least one member of the political or business elite were listed in the official bodies (management board, board of trustees, advisory council) or in the list of members respectively participants.

The journalistic elite were defined as the senior editorial staff of leading German media. Leading media were considered to be media that journalists themselves use frequently, that is, that have a leading function in their own sector. According to the last representative survey of journalists in Germany (Weischenberg et al. 2006: 134), the following print titles and TV news programmes were the most frequently used in 2005: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*, ARD-*Tagesschau*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, ARD-*Tagesthemen*, *Die Zeit*, *Bild*, ZDF *heute journal*, *taz*, *Stern*, *Focus*, *Die Welt*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Financial Times Deutschland*, n-tv-Nachrichten and ZDF *heute*. Added to these were the online media *spiegel.de*, *sueddeutsche.de*, *tagesschau.de*, *bild.de* and *welt.de* since, according to another survey of journalists in 2007 (Machill et al. 2008: 196), these were used with similar frequency. For these media, the persons holding down the following senior positions between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2009 were identified: in the case of the print and online media, the editor-in-chief, managing editor, heads of the political and business department (or similarly named departments) and manager of the Berlin offices, and all their deputies, as well as the publisher (if he is not the media proprietor); in the case of the TV programmes the director of the broadcasting company, its chief editor and the manager of the Berlin studio, as well as their deputies. The total population of the journalistic elite in the period 2007-2009 comprised 219 persons.

To determine who is considered to be a position elite in politics and business, the last major German elite survey was consulted (Bürklin et al. 1997). The German political elite were deemed to be the incumbents of leading positions in parliaments, governments, parties, ministries and major administrations at the federal and state level; the business elite were deemed to be people with managerial or supervisory functions (usually: management boards and supervisory councils) in companies posting annual turnover of at least €1bn (in the case of banks, the total assets), as well as the heads of the most important trade associations. The equivalent leading positions in other states and at the transnational level (international government organizations such as the EU, NATO, UN, the World Bank, IMF, WTO) were added to this selection, as were representatives of public relations and lobbies who were clearly serving the political and business elite defined above.

The period during which this common involvement was allowed to fall was 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2009. The assumptions behind were: If a journalist and a member of the political or business elite are both involved in one organization, they (1) may not necessarily know each other personally, but have a potential for contact and are available for each other; and they (2) share basic positions, at least that the organization is legitimate and its mission is right and important.

The raw data was collected mainly in the World Wide Web, by searching for names of the elite journalists and for elite organizations. Besides that, a number of organizations were asked for lists of members or participants (not always successfully). All persons involved in the organizations were entered into an Excel table and this table was then evaluated using the network analysis software 'Pajek'.

4 Results of the social network analysis

Of the 219 journalists in the population, 64 (one-third) were found in 82 organizations where they potentially had contact with the political and/or business elite. Of these 64 journalists with elite networks, four foreign policy journalists had ego networks in an elite milieu of foreign and security policy with an emphasis on the USA and NATO: the chief foreign editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* Klaus-Dieter Frank-

enberger, the chief foreign editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)* Stefan Kornelius, the co-publisher-editor of *Die Zeit* Josef Joffe, and the chief correspondent of *Die Welt*, Michael Stürmer. The first three ego networks are presented below.

Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, chief foreign editor at the *FAZ* since 2001, participated in the Munich Security Conference during the period of the study, was a member of the Trilateral Commission (a private organization that was founded in 1973 by US banker David Rockefeller and that connects elites from North America, Western Europe and the Asia-Pacific region), sat on the advisory councils of the pro-US *Atlantische Initiative* and of the *Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik* (Federal College for Security Studies, a think tank of the German Ministry of Defense), as well as being a director of the *Institut für Europäische Politik* (Institute for European Policy). If we look at the persons with whom he potentially had contact in these organizations, we see that some parts of Frankenberger's network were extremely redundant; i.e., he could not meet totally different people in each organization, but always the same. The greatest intersection of persons existed between the Trilateral Commission and the Munich Security Conference, with 31 persons (fig. 1). Frankenberger had multiple links to the milieu of transatlantic German and American elites, and some to a pro-EU milieu.

A potential for contact through at least two common organizations existed with 61 persons. Among those were 15 German political elites (e.g., Chancellor Angela Merkel, government ministers zu Guttenberg, Steinmeier, Schäuble, Westerwelle, Jung), two members of the German business elite (Müller/Commerzbank, Bischoff/Daimler), two members of the US political elite (Steinberg, Holbrooke), four US political scientists with political links[1] and three ministers of European states. A strong potential for contact through at least three organizations existed with 10 persons (fig. 2): members of the German political elite (zu Guttenberg, Ischinger, Voigt, Lauk) and German political scientists with political links (Sandschneider, Kaiser, Perthes, Weidenfeld).

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[1] Political scientists with political links were deemed to be political scientists whose institutions are (co-)funded by politicians and who advise the latter: *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*), or who have already held government office (such as the former US assistant foreign secretary Joseph S. Nye, Jr., who later became a Harvard professor).
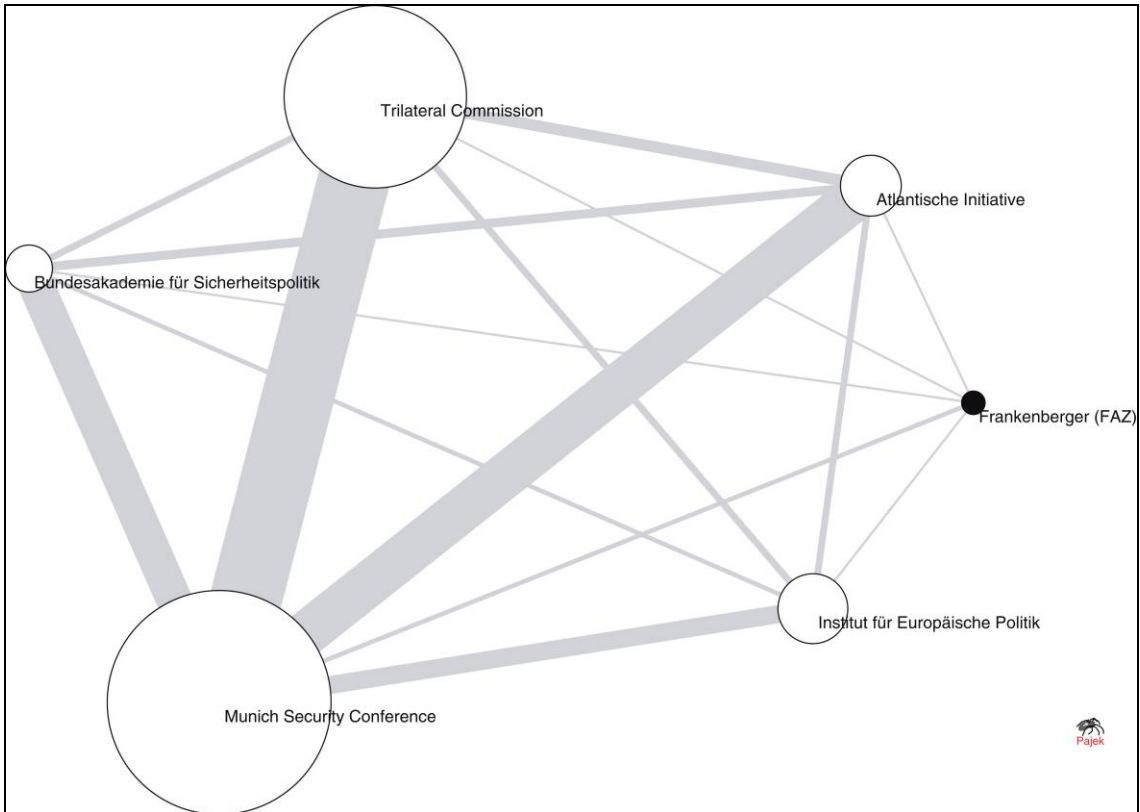
Fig. 1: Ego network of FAZ senior editor K-D Frankenberger as a network of organizations. The size of the nodes (circles) shows how many persons altogether are involved in the organization; the thickness of the edges (lines) shows how many persons the organizations have in common.
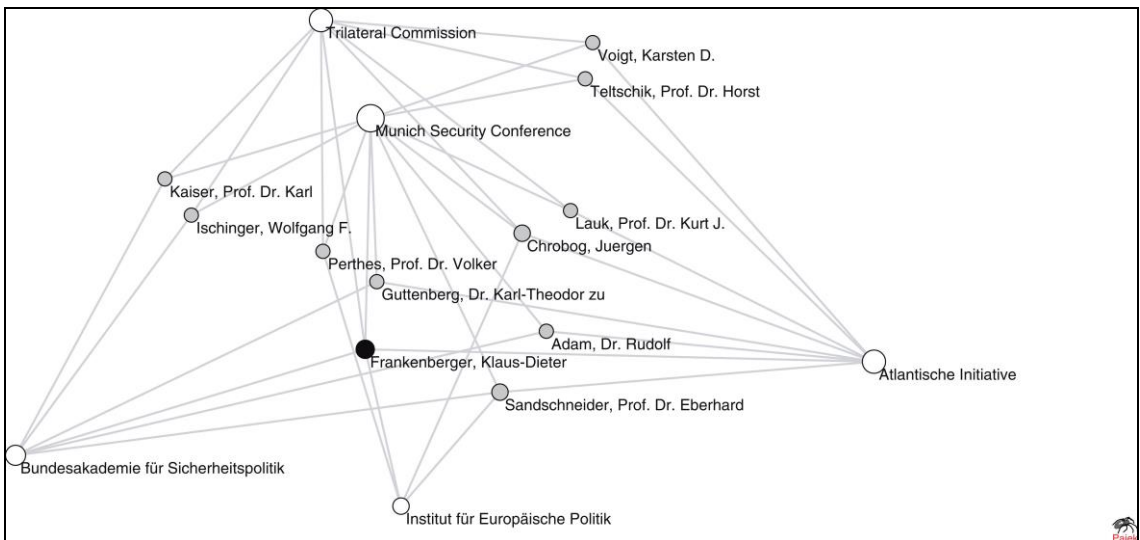

Fig. 2: Ego network of FAZ senior editor K-D Frankenberger: the 10 persons with whom there existed a strong potential for contact through at least three organizations.

Frankenberger's counterpart at the rival newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* is Stefan Kornelius, who has been chief foreign editor there since 2000. He also participated in the Munich Security Conference and sat on the advisory council of the *Bundesakademie für*

Sicherheitspolitik. Furthermore, he was a member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik (German Council on Foreign Relations, DGAP) which connects leading politicians, business elites, academics and the media, and of the advisory council of its journal, *Internationale Politik* (International Policy). He was a member of the Executive Board of the German Atlantic Association, an organization which lobbies for NATO. He took part in numerous discussions and forums at the Körber Foundation which published his book '*Der unerklärte Krieg – Deutschlands Selbstbetrug in Afghanistan*' ('The Undeclared War – Germanys Self-Deception in Afghanistan', 2009). The Washington-based American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS) describes him as a 'frequent contributor to AICGS programmes and events'. His network, too, displayed many redundancies, the largest intersection of persons (19) existing between the Munich Security Conference and the DGAP (fig. 3).

A potential for contact through at least two common organizations existed with 57 persons, including 12 members of the German political elite (such as Chancellor Angela Merkel and government ministers Steinmeier, Jung, Westerwelle, Schäuble, zu Guttenberg and Ramsauer), six members of the German business elite (Chrobog/MAN Ferrostaal, Oetker/Federal Association of Germany Industry, Dornisch/Diehl, Inacker/Metro, Enders/EADS/Airbus, Roland Berger) and two members of the US business elite. A strong potential for contact through three or more organizations existed with nine persons (fig. 4), including three members of the German political elite (zu Guttenberg, Steinmeier, Ischinger), and three German political scientists with political links (Sandschneider, Kaiser, Perthes).
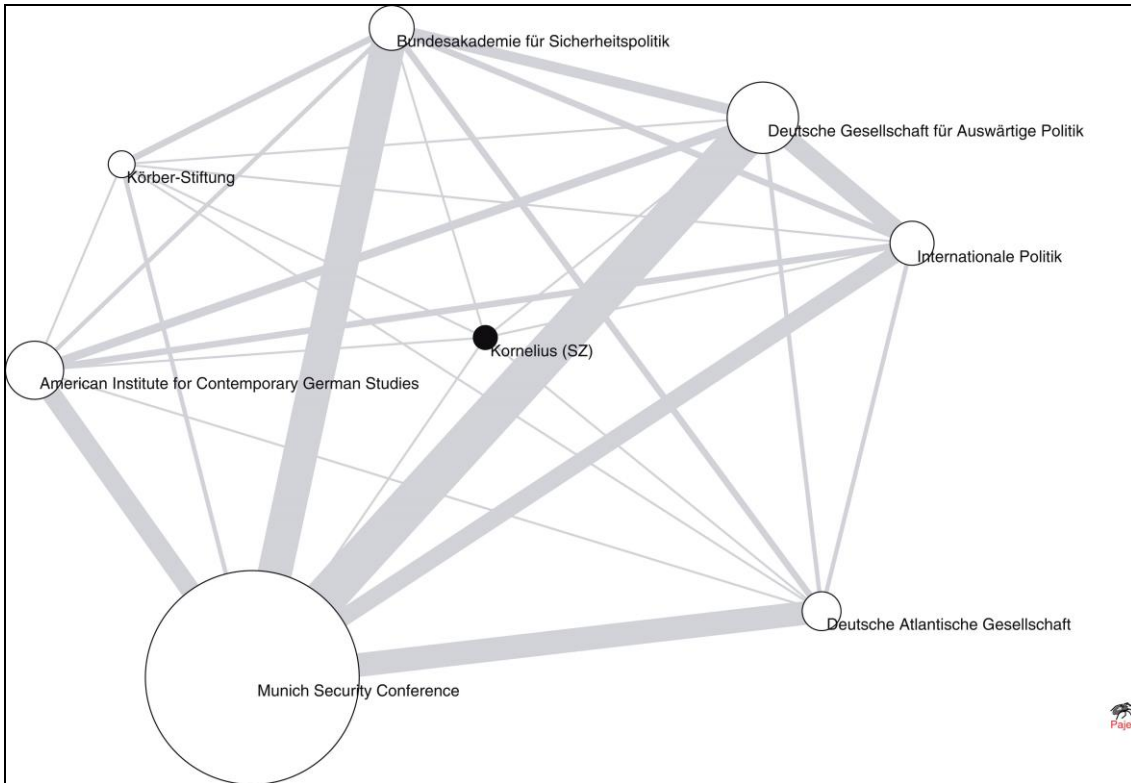
Fig. 3: Ego network of SZ senior editor Stefan Kornelius as a network of organizations showing the overlaps of persons between the individual organizations.
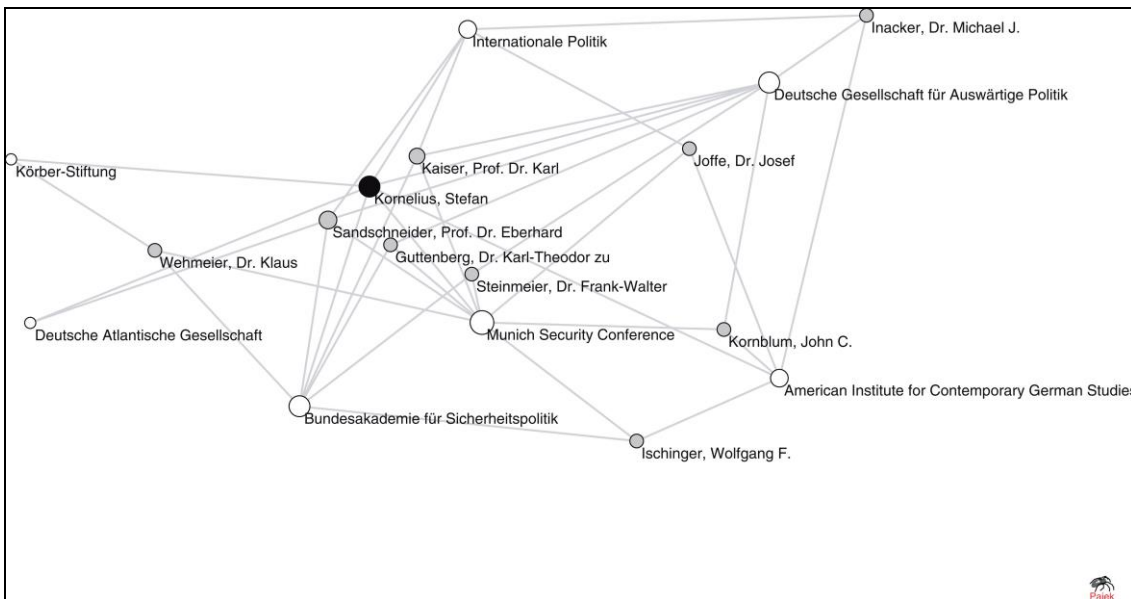

Fig. 4: Ego network of SZ senior editor Stefan Kornelius: the nine persons with whom existed a high potential for contact through at least three organizations.

Josef Joffe has been publisher-editor of the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* since 2000. During the period under study, he participated in the Munich Security Conference, the Bilderberg Conference and the World Economic Forum in Davos. He was a member of the Trilateral Commission, the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and the American Council on Germany in New York. He sat on the boards of trustees of the

Atlantik-Brücke (Atlantic Bridge), the Aspen Institute in Berlin, the American Academy in Berlin, the AICGS and the Council on Public Policy, as well as on the advisory councils of the journals *Europe's World*, *Internationale Politik* and *The American Interest*; he is also co-founder of the latter. Joffe's network is extremely redundant; the largest intersections existed between the World Economic Forum and Bilderberg (47 persons) as well as between Bilderberg and the Trilateral Commission (43 persons) (fig. 5). A transatlantic elite milieu is clearly recognizable, as well as some links to a pro-EU milieu. A potential for contact through at least two organizations existed with 235 persons and through at least three organizations with 54 persons (fig. 6). These include 5 members of the German political elite (such as Merkel, Guttenberg and Westerwelle), nine members of the German business elite (Ackermann/Deutsche Bank, Enders/Airbus/EADS, Bischoff/Daimler, Berger/Roland Berger, Viermetz/Hypo Real Estate, Müller/Commerzbank, Löscher/Siemens, Kleinfeld/Siemens/Alcoa, Oetker/Federal Association of Germany Industry), three members of the US business elite (Langhammer, Rubenstein, Sutherland), 5 members of the US political elite (Kimmitt, Steinberg, Volcker, Jones Jr., Holbrooke), two ministers of EU states (Schwarzenberg, Bildt), as well as 5 political scientists with ties to the government from Germany, France and the USA (Sandschneider, Kaiser, Perthes, Montbrial, Summers, Blackwill).
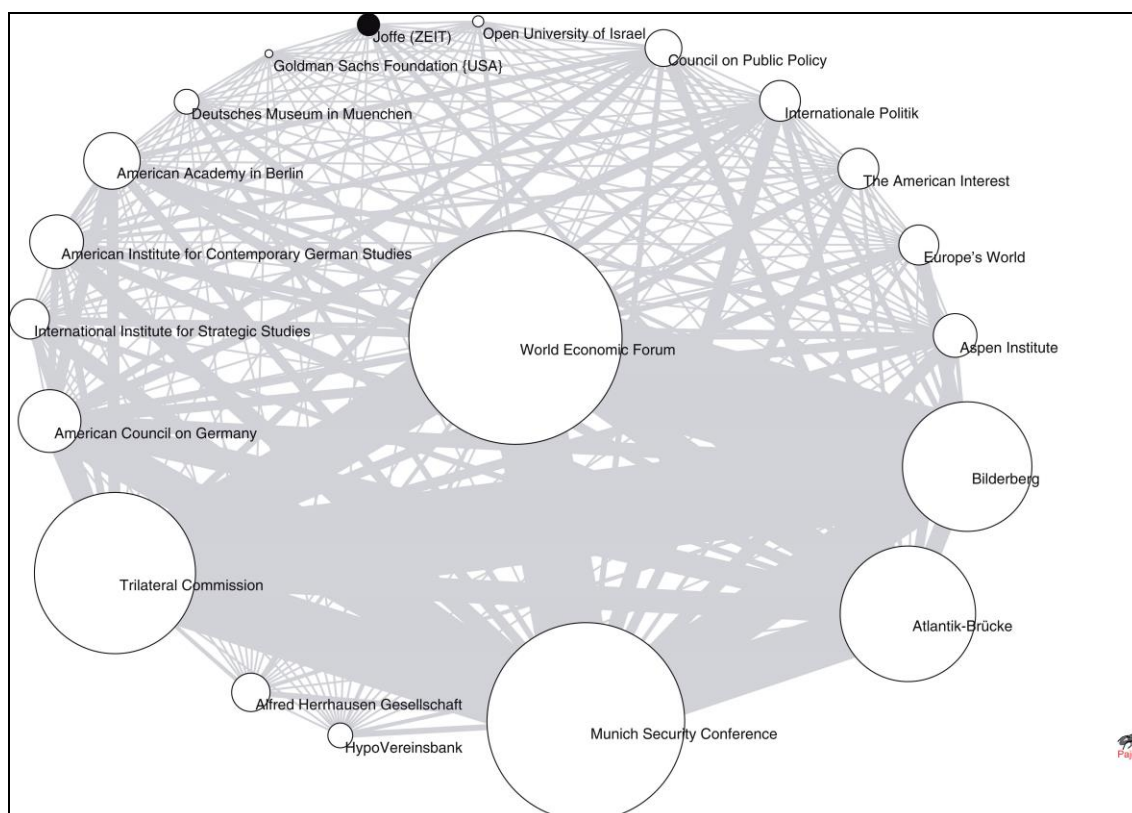
Fig. 5: Ego network of Die Zeit editor-publisher Josef Joffe as a network of organizations showing the intersections of persons between the organizations.
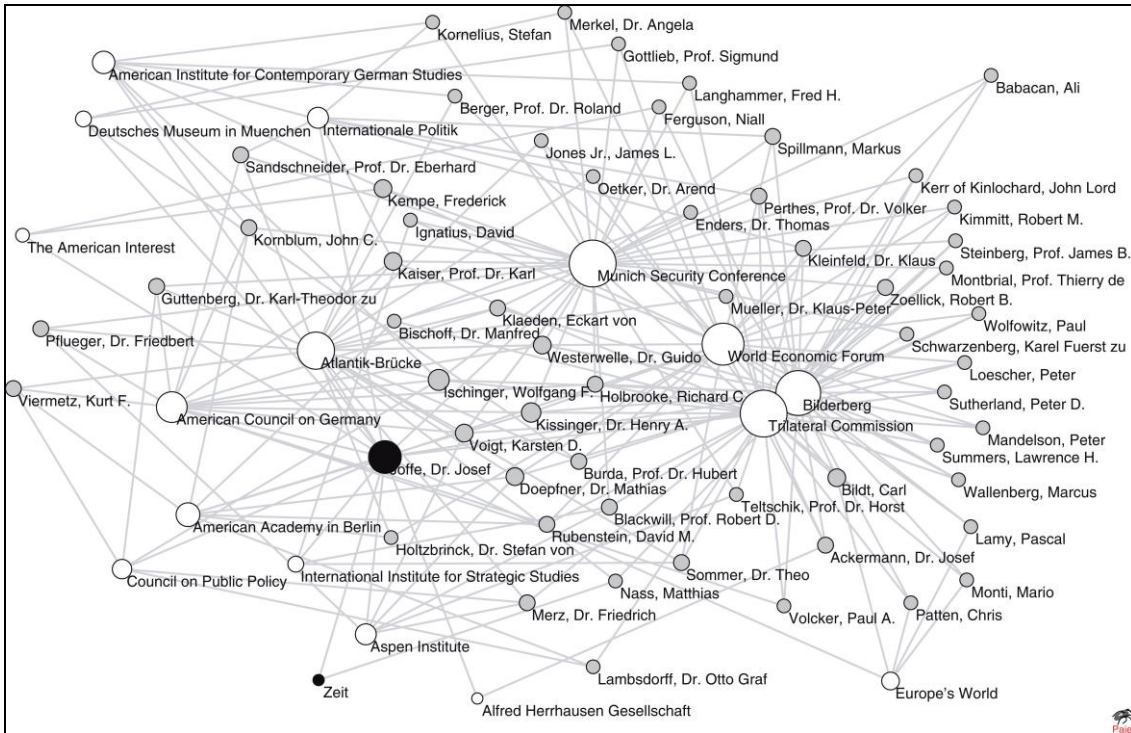

Fig. 6: Ego network of Die Zeit editor-publisher Joffe: the 54 persons with whom there existed a high potential for contact through at least three organizations.

Did these elite networks with close ties to the US influence the journalists' reporting, or at least had some coincidence with it? To answer this question, the journalistic output of the four journalists was examined to see whether it followed the US and NATO line on issues of security, defense and Bundeswehr deployments abroad.

5 Theme and design of the frame analysis

Since the end of the Cold War, the Euro-Atlantic elite have used an 'extended security concept' that no longer sees security policy as warding off military threats on their own territory, but as all-encompassing prevention of all possible risks: terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy, drugs, organized crime, environmental damage and climate change, demographic growth, migration, refugee flows and much more besides (cf. Daase 2010, Lange 2006, Brock 2005). The aim of security policy is no longer just to protect the territorial integrity of their own state or of that of their NATO partners, but also their economic prosperity, supplies of raw materials and ener-

gy and communications infrastructure. The extended security concept has a history which reaches back several decades in US policy and political science (cf. Daase 1991); it explicitly appeared for the first time in 1991 in a NATO strategy paper (Lange 2006: 288). For Germany, it can be found in the 1992 and 2003 defense policy guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Defense and in the 2006 Bundeswehr White Paper. It also appeares in the 'Celler Trialog', an annual conference held since 2007 of representatives from politics, the military and business[2], as well as the Munich Security Conference[3].

Böckenförde (2007) interprets the extension of the concept as a change of the security policy paradigm 'from defense to protection' and 'from determent to intervention'. Daase (2010: 1) points out the political significance of this extension: 'The one who obtains the last word in defining the concept of 'security' determines which risks are perceived, which themes are given priority and which strategies are considered appropriate (…).' Consequently, the most frequent criticism is that an extended concept of the term 'security' may lead to an adoption of military logic in many policy fields. 'All experience shows that extending the feeling of threat (...) tends rather to foster acceptance of military prevention or military intervention in acute conflicts than political willingness to get involved in lengthy, civilian methods of conflict resolution' (Brock 2005: 19). Further points of criticism are that an extended security concept may collide with the primacy of peacekeeping enshrined in the German constitution and that it offers an inherent lack of reflection about the West's own contribution to foreign crises (Jaberg 2010: 32-38).

Since the extended security concept has not yet been accepted by the German population, or is at least a subject of controversy, the majority of Germans are sceptical concerning the deployment of the Bundeswehr in Afghanistan and reject the idea of a military 'out-of-area' commitment. For example, in 2008 a general population survey by the Bundeswehr showed that 53 percent of German adults took the view that Germany should keep out of crises and conflicts in other countries as far as possible and concentrate more on resolving problems in its own country (Bulmahn 2008: 13). According to the regular Infratest-Dimap surveys conducted for ARD, between September 2009 and

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[2] http://www.bmvg.de/fileserving/PortalFiles/C1256EF40036B05B/W27FBL5W774   INFODE/Celler_ Appell.pdf (consulted on 16 July 2013)
[3] http://www.securityconference.de/Ziele.47.0.html (consulted on 16 July 2013)

April 2010 57-71 percent of Germans were in favour of a rapid withdrawal of German troops from Afghanistan.[4] And when the German president Horst Köhler, in a radio interview in May 2010, suggested that Bundeswehr deployments abroad were in the country's economic interests, he was met by a wave of outraged protest both from the general population and from the – electorate-dependent – political class (Brössler 2010); yet he had only said what was already stated publicly in government documents and was therefore the consensus view of the elite.

Regarding this gap between the elite and the general population, what stance do the four journalists who are networked in the milieu of the German government, NATO and the USA take in relation to the extended security concept and Bundeswehr deployments abroad? Using the Genios database, all articles by the four journalists between 4 December 2002 and 30 September 2010[5] containing at least two of the following five terms were identified: *sicherheit (that is, any term containing the word 'security'); verteidig* (any verb, noun, etc. containing the root of the German word for defense); krieg* (any word containing the German word for 'war'); fried* (any word containing the root of the German word for 'peace'); milit* (military, militaristic, militarism, etc.). All the articles having no relation to German or European foreign and security policy, or which were only co-written by the journalists, as well as all interviews conducted by the authors were removed from the list of hits.

The texts were scanned for frame elements that bore a relation to the researched issue. Frame elements can be seen as arguments or units of meaning which come together to make up an explicit or implicit frame; a frame is a consistent horizon of meaning 'which joins various convictions together to form a theme' (Matthes 2007: 134-135) and always consists of four elements: definition of the problem, attribution of causes, attribution of solution or call for act, and explicit assessment (ibid.). Not all four elements

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[4] http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/umfragen/aktuell/
sieben-von-zehn-deutschen-fuer-einen-schnellstmoeglichen-abzug-der-bundeswehr-aus-afghanistan/
(consulted on 16 July 2013)

[5] On 4 December 2002 the concept of security was publicly extended for the first time by a German politician, namely Defense Minister Peter Struck, who in a speech before the German Bundestag said: 'Theoretically one can say that Germany's security is also being defended in the Hindu Kush' (quoted by Weiland 2002). The end of the research period marked the beginning of the debate on the abolition or suspension of military service (in the aim of transforming the Bundeswehr from the defense army of the Cold War period into a smaller, professional intervention unit for deployments abroad). This was interspersed by debates on the crisis in transatlantic relations caused by Schröder's 'No' to the war in Iraq, the prolongation of the Bundeswehr mandate in Afghanistan and requests by the USA for greater military commitment in Afghanistan on Germany's part.

have to be explicitly present in an article, but the presence of two elements suffices 'to automatically activate others, as the elements are interconnected, as in a network' (*ibid*.: 138).

The frame elements were determined by inductive and qualitative reasoning (Dahinden 2006: 201). Relevant sections of text taken from a random sample of the text material were written out by open coding, these constructions were condensed and related back to the purpose of the study and in this way, the frame elements gradually were revealed. Früh (2007: 156-157) calls this procedure 'empirically-led categorisation'. Frame elements were only coded if the author of the article proposed them himself (in the indicative, without any reference to a source), or if he quoted another actor and then either explicitly reinforced or continued the argument in such a way that clearly showed that he agreed with that argument. If he only quoted the argument (indirect speech or quotation marks with a reference to the source) and then countered or mitigated it, it was not coded. Each frame element was counted once per article, regardless of whether it was touched only in a fragment of a sentence or explained in detail.

6 Frame analysis results

A total of 83 articles were found in which arguments of relevance to the present study occurred; most of them were comments and editorials (tab. 1).

Tab. 1: Distribution of articles found by journalist and by type.

	Editorial*	Comment	Report	Other**	Total
Kornelius (SZ)	12	5	2	2	21
Frankenberger (FAZ)	10	1	5	5	21
Joffe (Zeit)	9	4	0	0	13
Stürmer (Welt)	8	13	2	5	28
Total	39	23	9	12	83

*The articles considered as editorials are: in *SZ* the comment on the top left-hand side of page 4 ('*Opinion*'); in *FAZ* the two comments on the front page; in *Die Zeit* the two articles on the front page; in *Die Welt* the article headed '*Leitartikel*' on page 6 ('*Opinion*').
** 'Other' includes essays, analyses and commemorative articles on historical anniversaries.

The arguments found were condensed into 23 frame elements. Tab. 2 and the related network diagram (fig. 7) show how they are distributed between the individual authors. There are numerous overlaps between the arguments of the four journalists. Only three frame elements belong exclusively to one journalist. By contrast, nine elements are used

by all four and another nine by no less than three. The most important frame elements are displayed below by exemplary quotations.
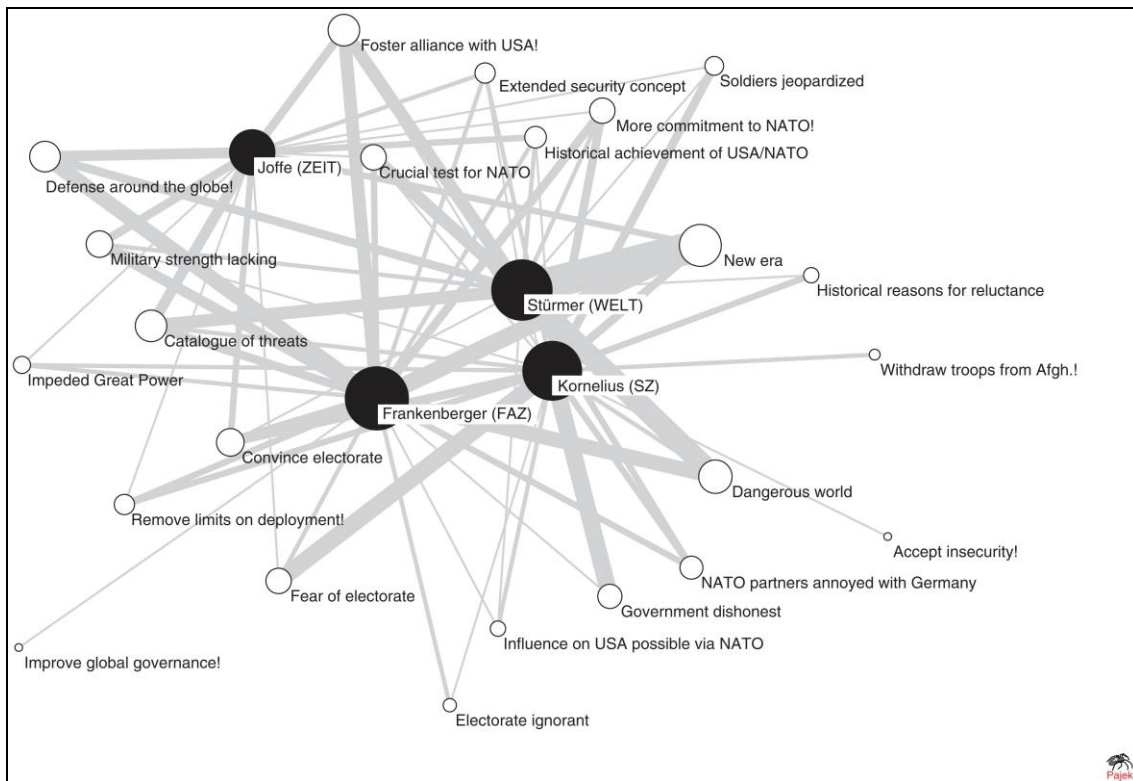

Fig. 7: Appearance of frame elements in the journalists' output, displayed as a network diagram. The size of the white nodes (circles) indicates how often the frame element was used in total; the thickness of the edges (lines) between a journalist and a frame element indicates how often this journalist used this specific frame element.

Tab. 2: Appearance of the frame elements in the journalists' output.

Frame element	Kornelius	Frankenberger	Joffe	Stürmer	Total
01 Fear of population	8	2	1	0	11
02 Catalogue of threats	2	4	5	6	17
03 Withdraw troops from Afghanistan!	2	0	0	0	2
04 Foster alliance with USA!	1	6	4	6	17
05 Remove limits on deployment!	3	3	1	0	7
06 Extended security concept	2	2	2	1	7
07 Dangerous world	2	7	0	10	19
08 Improve global governance!	0	1	0	0	1
09 Historical achievement of USA/NATO	1	2	3	2	8
10 More commitment to NATO!	4	4	1	2	11
11 Military strength lacking	1	5	4	2	12
12 NATO partners annoyed with Germany	3	3	0	3	9
13 New era	4	8	3	14	29
14 Government dishonest	8	1	0	1	10
15 Soldiers jeopardized	4	0	1	1	6
16 Accept insecurity!	1	0	0	0	1

17 Impeded Great Power	2	2	1	0	5
18 Defense around the globe!	0	7	5	4	16
19 Influence on USA possible via NATO	2	1	0	1	4
20 Population ignorant	1	2	0	0	3
21 Convince population!	4	5	3	1	13
22 Crucial test for NATO	1	3	1	6	11
23 Historical reasons for reluctance	4	0	0	1	5

All four journalists write in detail about the concept of security and that it has become broader, or has to be viewed more broadly, without questioning it critically (frame element: 'extended security concept'):

> 'The financial crisis and the energy debate have shown that **security is actually a broad concept**.' (Kornelius: *Neue Töne aus dem Bayerischen Hof*, *SZ,* 3 Feb. 2010, emphasis added.)

> 'And under the new defense policy guidelines, Germany's security is being defended even at the Hindu Kush, which signifies a **globalization and extension of the traditional**, **geographical concept of security.** That the traditional limitations were abandoned is **right**; they had become obsolete because the circumstances have fundamentally changed.' (Frankenberger: *Deutsche Verantwortung*, *FAZ,* 24 May 2003)

> '*War of choice* is the English expression for when a state deploys its soldiers when no immediate danger is threatened. In this case, it does so in the name of an **'extended security concept'**, which once fostered pillage and expansion, but which today, at least in the context of Germany, **should not be derided as a cynical masquerade**.' (Joffe: *Dabei sein ist nicht alles*, *Die Zeit,* 13 September 2006)

> '**In the meantime, security has come to extend geographically as far as the Hindu Kush and economically as far as the causes of terrorism**, although these – poverty, anger or religious fervour – are still a matter of controversy.' (Stürmer: *Allianz der Widersprüche*, *Die Welt,* 14 February 2005)

All four journalists further mention a catalogue of threats similar to the catalogue of threats in official documents of the German government, the EU, NATO and the USA (frame element: 'catalogue of threats'):

> 'The last few years have drastically expanded the spectrum of threats, with jihadi **terrorism** and all its manifestations at the top of the list, followed by other religiously motivated threats but also by fears triggered by **climate change**, **energy supplies** or even **refugee flows**.' (Kornelius: '*Ohne Sicherheit*', *SZ*, 10-11 July 2007, translated by the author)

> 'These dangers and challenges range from **terrorism to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to energy and climate change right through to cyber attacks, economic instability and pandemics**. Indeed, the list is even longer.' (Frankenberger: *Aktion Partnersuche*, *FAZ*, 8 February 2010)

> 'God knows that there are enough 'global challenges': from **climate to poverty, from terrorism right through to nuclear armament** by those who are not known for their sense of responsibility.' (Joffe: *Von wegen Kalter Krieg*, *Die Zeit*, 15 February 2007)

> 'We look in vain for the global concept that includes even Russia's interests and the common threat from **terror and weapons of mass destruction, cyber war and organized crime, cli-**

mate change and mass movements of populations.' (Stürmer: *Nato im Blindflug*, *Die Welt*, 1 April 2008)

All except Kornelius state explicitly that today, Germany ought to defend its security or interests globally and fight threats where they appear, or is already rightly doing so (frame element: 'Defense around the globe!'):

> 'Even if there seems to be acceptance that security threats **are rightly countered by military means at the place where they arise**, actual political and military practice is somewhat different.' (Frankenberger: *Bewährung am Hindukusch*, *FAZ*, 27 November 2006)

> 'The SPD defense minister **Peter Struck was right when he pontificated that Germany had to be defended even in the Hindu Kush.** Classical territorial wars are currently 'out' in Europe, the threat comes from far away (...).' (Joffe: *Kreuz des Südens*, *Die Zeit*, 7 February 2008)

> 'Germany is being defended even at the Hindu Kush – **what the former defense minister Peter Struck** said in his variation on the theme of globalization **is doubtless true**.' (Stürmer: *Die Kräfte reichen nicht*, *Die Welt*, 21 November 2006)

All four are unanimous that Germany should foster the alliance with the USA (or trans-atlantic relations, or relations with NATO) to be able to respond adequately to the given threats (Frame element: 'Foster alliance with USA!'):

> 'Anyone who is on the look-out for an alternative to NATO will be rapidly disappointed: **there is no better alternative**.' (Kornelius: *Deutsche Lebenslügen*, *SZ*, 8 February 2008)

> 'If it is true that the West is set to become relatively, but permanently, less important and influential, **it would be absolute madness to expand and deepen the political and politico-cultural gulf that has opened up in our relationship with the USA**. In that case, just the opposite ought to be done..' (Frankenberger: *Böse neue Welt*, *FAZ*, 5 November 2006)

> 'Anyone who does not like the USA should bear in mind the power relations. (...) **Sober, interest-driven politics bid us never to let the 'line to Washington' be severed.** All the more so as the congruence of interests is far broader than Schröder or Bush have ever admitted.' (Joffe: *Mit oder gegen Amerika*, *Die Zeit*, 15 September 2005)

> 'Germany's security is still a derivative of European architecture, which in **turn is a derivative of the American 'grand strategy'**. In the defense ministries and the major military headquarters, people know very well that **without US information technology, transport capacity and power projections, the Europeans are lost if the going gets tough.**' (Stürmer: *Neuer Ernst. Neue Nato? Die Welt*, 4 November 2003)

Given the fact that a majority of Germans are sceptical about NATO military deployments, especially in Afghanistan, all four call for greater persuasion and leadership from German politicians (frame element 'Convince population!'):

> '**There is an urgent need for politicians to bring the debate into the public arena**. Germans do not understand why their Bundeswehr is being deployed in Afghanistan. (...) Germany is a country of consensus; the Bundestag takes the decisions as to whether or not to deploy the soldiers. But no one is forcing the political leadership, in a key foreign policy issue, to show pre-

cisely the opposite: **too little leadership**.' (Kornelius: *Politiker, die nicht überzeugen*, *SZ*, 11 February 2008)

'**Politicians cannot shy away from the battle for public opinion at the home front** if they are convinced of what they profess. (...) The **fight for 'hearts and minds' has to be fought at home, too.'** (Frankenberger: *Wo wir unsere Sicherheit verteidigen*, *FAZ*, 7 January 2008)

'All politicians have to respect what the voters want. But the German constitution does not prohibit the government **from advertising what is expedient in foreign policy matters.'** (Joffe: *Kreuz des Südens, Die Zeit*, 7 February 2008)

'Anyone who sends soldiers to their potential death must match military means to political goals. **Leading also means explaining, justifying** and, last but not least, limiting. Action is required of the chancellor.' (Stürmer: *Unbezähmbares Land, Die Welt*, 21 April 2010)

Even if there are certain differences between the four journalists in the number and weighting of the frame elements, the patterns of argument are similar and the main thrust identical: an extended concept of security is necessary, Germany has to increase its commitment to NATO and the transatlantic partnership, and the German government has to make more efforts to convince the sceptical electorate to support an active foreign and security policy assisted by military means.

7 Synopsis and discussion

It has been shown that four influential foreign policy journalists from *SZ*, *FAZ*, *Die Zeit* and *Die Welt* are tied to pro-transatlantic political and business elite from Germany and the USA. Furthermore, a coincidence has been found between these networks and the authors' journalistic output. In fundamental questions of security, defense and Bundeswehr deployments abroad they took the line of the USA and NATO, and in relation to the corresponding gap between elites and the German population were on the side of the German federal government. They argued in favour of an extended security concept, global defense of German interests, close ties with the USA and greater persuasion efforts by the German government to convince the German electorate.

With the utmost probability, there is a connection between the social networks and the arguments of those high-ranking journalists. According to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital, thanks to close relationships with their sources journalists can obtain exclusive information and background knowledge, but the price could be solidarity and conformity with the sources' aims (Jansen 2000: 37). However, a *causal* connection between the embeddedness in an elite milieu and the journalists' reasoning cannot be

maintained. The expressed opinions of the journalists have not necessarily adjusted to suit that of their social environment. It is also possible that the networks arose only *because* the journalists had opinions compatible with those of the elite (this view is suggested by the concept of homophily, cf. McPherson et al. 2001 and Lazarsfeld/Merton 1954). Probably, it is a combination of both: journalists are only co-opted by political and business elites if they do not express overly critical attitudes and opinions, and their bonding with the elite milieu over time strengthens their conformity or makes any questioning of the elite consensus increasingly improbable. This could be explained with the individual's fear of isolation that underlies the Spiral of Silence theory. According to empirical studies in this research tradition, the willingness to speak out depends, among other factors, on the perceived climate of opinion in a person's direct social environment (Fuchs et al. 1992, Scherer 1992).

But after all, the methodological limitations of this study should be mentioned. This study could not consider aspects of individual psychology – two different journalists may handle influences from elite sources in a fundamentally different way, just because of different mental structures. Furthermore, it has not measured influences on the journalists' opinions that are connected with the sociology of the newsroom (as described by Gans 1980 and his successors). But here is an important parallel to the seminal work of Gans: While Gans concluded from his examination of US newsrooms that American journalists absorb and express in their work – without always realizing it – the ruling ideas in American society, we assume that German elite journalists absorb and express in their work – also without always realizing it – the ruling ideas in the elite milieu. And we could add warnings (similar to those of Gans) about the centralizing of power and the disempowerment of many non-elite citizens.

Statement on research materials:
Raw data of the Social Network Analysis and the Frame Analysis can be accessed from the author via e-mail.

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