

Media Systems and Media Cultures: News Coverage of Deportation in the US and Austria

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Executive Summary

Öffentlichkeit und ihre Fähigkeit für politische Verantwortlichkeit zu sorgen ist in Zeiten von Wikileaks und erfolgreichen Demokratiebewegungen in Nordafrika und im Nahen Osten wieder brennendes Thema. Mediensysteme – also Nachrichtenmedien verortet im Machtverhältnis zu Staat, Markt und Zivilgesellschaft – gelten auch in Zeiten sozialer Medien als zentrale Einrichtung um diese Kontrollfunktion von Öffentlichkeiten sicherzustellen.

Dieses Forschungsprojekt untersucht die Mediensysteme der USA und Österreich, ausgehend von zwei Fallstudien politisch brisanter Deportationsfälle (Elián González und Arigona Zogaj). Die Zeitungsberichterstattung über diese Episoden spiegelt nicht nur Machtverhältnisse in diesen Mediensystemen wieder sondern auch damit zusammenhängend unterschiedliche, historisch gewachsene journalistische Kulturen. Neben diesen Fallstudien, die in Bezug auf argumentative Framings und narrative Strukturen untersucht wurden, geben Interviews mit JournalistInnen in beiden Kontexten Auskunft über die zugrunde liegende Berufspraxis. Dieses Forschungsdesign erhebt keinen Anspruch auf Generalisierbarkeit sondern zielt darauf ab, aus einem tieferen Verständnis bewusst ausgewählter Fälle kausale Prozesse aufzuweisen, die weitere Implikationen haben und bisherige theoretische Annahmen erweitern können.

Die Analyse hat ergeben, dass – obwohl es sich um möglichst unterschiedliche Zeitungen gehandelt hat – in Falle Österreich *Krone* und *Standard* unterschiedlicher über den stark politisierten Fall Arigona Zogaj berichtet haben als *New York Times* und *New York Post* über den nicht minder kontroversen Fall Elián González in den USA. Obwohl sich speziell in den Meinungsstellen die unterschiedlichen politischen Positionen der jeweiligen Gegensatzpaare deutlich gezeigt hat, hat sich diese in der faktischen Berichterstattung in den US-Blättern weniger bemerkbar gemacht.

Unter anderem geht dieser Forschungsbericht diesen blinden Flecken in österreichischen Medien anhand von drei Bedingungen des Mediensystems auf den Grund: Politischer Parallelismus, ein geringer Professionalisierungsgrad des Journalismus und unterschiedliche Berufstraditionen.

Politischer Parallelismus bedeutet nicht (unbedingt), dass Medien Ideologien politischer Akteure unkritisch übernehmen, sondern dass sie ihre thematischen Schwerpunkte nach ihnen orientieren, was bei einem pluralistischeren Parteiensystem schwieriger abzuwenden sein mag als in einem de facto binären. Das resultiert wiederum darin, dass in jedem einzelnen Medium gewisse Debatten weitgehend ausgespart werden und dies zeigt sich im Falle Österreich ganz deutlich: der parlamentarische Ausschuss über Amtsmissbrauch des Innenministeriums und Fremdenfeindlichkeit im Falle der *Krone*, Asylmissbrauch (der Zogajs und im Allgemeinen) im Falle des *Standard*. Im Vergleich dazu bestehen im Nachrichtendiskurs zwischen *New York Times* und *New York Post* in den USA – die auch in Punkto Rhetorik, Aufmachung, und politischen Standpunkten nicht unterschiedlicher sein könnten – wenig Unterschiede.

Der höhere Anteil der JournalistInnen, die eine einschlägige Ausbildung genossen haben (in Österreich 0% in 2007),¹ ist ein Maß für den höheren Professionalisierungsgrad des US-Journalismus. Einerseits wirkt die in Universitäten vermittelte Berufsethik und -praxis durch AbsolventInnen in Medienorganisationen weiter. Darüber hinaus nähren von diesen Institutionen publizierte Fachzeitschriften und massenmediale Veröffentlichungen den professionellen Diskurs in einem Ausmaß, welches in Österreich nicht vorhanden ist. Dies generiert institutionelle Normen, die Medienorganisationen ähnlicher werden lassen (normativer Isomorphismus).

Diese Normen sind mit einer historisch gewachsenen Berufsauffassung des US-JournalistInnen verknüpft,² deren zentraler Bestandteil – die so genannte Objektivitätsnorm – zu einer ausgeglicheneren Gewichtung verschiedener Perspektiven anleitet, selbst jene die dem Blatt widerstreben mögen. Abgesehen davon scheint die strikte redaktionelle und personelle Trennung zwischen Meinungs- und Nachrichtenjournalismus eine Rolle zu spielen.

Abschließen ist hinzuzufügen, dass einseitigere Berichterstattung einzelner Medien im Zeitalter des breiteren Medienkonsums im Internet weniger ausschlaggebend sein könnte, da sie in Summe eine größere Bandbreite von Standpunkten und Perspektiven anzubieten vermögen. Die theoretische Möglichkeit durch den Konsum eines einzelnen Nachrichtenmediums das gesamte Spektrum an zirkulierenden Diskursen gewahrt zu werden beantwortet noch nicht die Frage wie breit der Mediendiskurs als Ganzes ist. Dieses Forschungsprojekt kann hier keine Antworten bieten aber vorsichtige Hinweise geben, etwa auf die weitgehende Abwesenheit einer „strukturellen Debatte“ (etwa über das Kubaembargo, Kinderrechte oder Einwanderungsbestimmungen) gepaart mit einer Betonung auf fortwährende PR-inszenierte „human interest stories“ (à la „Elián González besucht Disneyland“), die auch in *New York Times* zu Buche schlagen und auf gewisse thematische Unterbelichtungen des gesamten Feldes hinweisen.

¹ Damit ist eine journalistische Ausbildung mit Universitätsabschluss im engeren Sinne gemeint (also *nicht* Publizistik/Kommunikationswissenschaften) unter angestellten JournalistInnen.

² Eine zentrale Bedingung dieser ist beispielsweise eine frühere Loslösung von Parteien (Parteipresse) neben einer tiefgreifenderen Kommerzialisierung.

Comparative Media Research

Civil societies require a “communicative geography which can open up ongoing conversations to new narratives and new points of difference.” (Jacobs 2000: 29-30) A range of media usually provides such a communicative geography in societies with a more or less free press. Whereas Jacobs is interested in a comparison of non-dominant and dominant public spheres, this project focuses on different locations within the dominant public sphere. The goal is to map the “maximum walkable distance” within this space, exemplified by newspapers. The printed press still enjoys a dominant position within the media systems, certainly not in terms of the end users it reaches but in terms of its interpretive and intertextual authority within news discourse as a whole. (*reference) Print journalism can be criticized on many levels but as regards news it is still as good as it gets in terms of richness of information provided, thus making it the ultimate reference point for other journalists.

Choosing a comparative framework to study media culture does not only stem from regional interests, therefore. It is also an empirical strategy of cross-validate and contextualize these “measured distances” as evidence from one national context can be more pronouncedly and convincingly causally linked to specific cultural and structural conditions of interest in the respective media system. Comparative research on media should be based on informed decisions about which countries to compare, the scope, which methods to use, argues Sonia Livingstone (2003). For the specific case of media, comparative research is no cure-all, Livingston warns us: “[H]owever we determine and defend our choices in cross- national research, we should resist the fantasy that by this means a complete, comprehensive account can be produced”. (Livingstone 2003: 494)

Furthermore, I see great potential for cross-fertilization of cultural sociology and comparative media research: A more nuanced understanding of media could certainly enrich the former. Research in cultural sociology often tends to take media as a proxy for the public and is thus leveling it without theorizing how the media realm itself is structured, disregarding that media have their own narrative agendas and their own cultural structure. A cultural perspective that has recently been demanded frequently could furthermore enrich the latter. Donsbach and Patterson (2004) argued that, whilst the fundamental duties of journalists might be similar in different environments, understandings of professional roles differ significantly, which they consider the foundations of *media* cultures. Occupational socialization, professional norms, and forms of editorial control are the areas where these roles are defined. Another level of analysis is suggested by Gurevitch and Blumler (2004), *political* culture, to study political communication in the future. Pfetsch (2004) takes the intermediate position and more specifically calls for research on *political communication* culture: “[E]xchanges between political actors and journalists are regulated by a set of orientations and norms within the media *and* political context, in other words, by the political communication culture” (Pfetsch 2004: 347-348; my emphasis)³ Pfetsch’s research is thus especially interested in the relationship between journalists and spokespersons. Benson and Saguy (2005) call for research on how culture is embedded in media organizations and how

³ She builds this argument on Blumler, Jay G. , and Michael Gurevitch. 1995. *The Crisis of Public Communication*. London; New York: Routledge.

this has consequences for competition of cultural frameworks. In short, there is considerable demand for cultural analysis in comparative media studies and media systems research.

Some groundwork in the field of comparative media studies has been laid in the past fifteen years: Comparison of European countries (Murschetz 1998) concludes that state subsidies serve are more beneficial for media diversity than the free market. Comparison of European journalistic code of ethics found communalities in terms of public accountability and the protection of the profession against external forces. (Laitila 1995) There is hardly comparative research on the Austrian and US media system. One exception deals with the shifting quality of news (hard vs. soft news), and points to similar problems in the US and Austria, supporting a homogenization hypothesis. (Plasser 2005)

There is, however, a growing literature on German-US (and –UK) comparative media research (the Austrian media system usually associated with the German). Here, examination of a particular kind of coverage – metacommunication (a critical discussion of journalism and communication by journalists, others (McNair 2006) call “process journalism”) – revealed different degrees of antagonism of journalists against PR in the U.S., U.K., and Germany (in decreasing order) (Esser, Reinemann and Fan 2001). Barbara Pfetsch (2001) argues that political communication is more media-driven in the U.S. and more politics-driven in Germany. Considering bias, Frank Esser (1998) found that in the U.K., with more division of labor and centralized organization within newsrooms, *organizational* bias is an issue, while in Germany reporters have multiple responsibilities, more autonomy and there is more room for *personal* bias. In a survey Patterson and Donsbach (1996) found significant correlation between dispositions and news decisions, while the effect is strongest where partisanship amongst journalists is most acceptable in general. (Köcher 1986 draws similar conclusions) According to another study, Esser (1999) shows that the German broadsheet newspapers are less susceptible to a trend he calls “tabloidization” (a combination of deterioration of journalistic standards, decline of hard news, and changing standards of evaluating political candidates) than the British papers. Ferree and colleagues find that German media provide less access to social movement activists than US media, institutionally and in terms of discursive opportunities provided (Ferree et al. 2002).

The most common transatlantic comparison is between France and the US and it seems that the understanding of the US media system particularly draws from this line of research. Hallin and Benson (2007) found that proximity to the political field does not (necessarily) prevent critical reporting and lead to more elite discourse. Different journalistic styles are a matter of political culture and professional traditions that cause cultural inertia against external influences. Comparing news discourse on immigration and sexual harassment over time, Benson and Saguy (2005) find persistent national differences of media frames, pointing to lasting cultural differences of the French and US media systems.

It is not necessarily the concern to compare *Austria* with the US, for obvious reasons. My linguistic capabilities restrict me to do a English-German comparison in the first place. Furthermore, the idea of a comparing these particular cases started with the objective to study social drama. At the time this project was born, the Arigona case was going on for a year and should be going on for another 1.5 years. This social drama, as well as the Elián González refugee case, promised to reveal important characteristics of civil discourse of the societies under study as well as its news media: It combines human drama, political conflict, legal disputes, popular protest (in the US even riots), metacommentary about media themselves, and diffusion in other areas of public debate. In the following I hope to be able

to demonstrate this.

First, I will discuss my theoretical framework to study these news cultures before explaining how I will go about doing this empirically, by means of the cases at hand and combining more and less standardized methods of content and textual analysis. I will then summarize and interpret the results (in above order) before discussing them together in conclusion.

Theoretical framework

Democratic Theory

While many theories of democracy are not concerned with the structure of media systems (as the central institutional realm constituting public sphere(s)) altogether, those who *are* interested in these (potentially) deliberative institutions disregard their cultural underpinning, inertia against external influences resulting from this, as well as the symbolic significance of their products. Part of the blame is surely to be attributed to the ultimate intellectual reference point, Jürgen Habermas, whose normative theory of the political public sphere dispels culture and meaning to the periphery of the lifeworld. While the claim for the triumph of the best argument might be normatively desirable, we do not only need to measure the degree real publics deviate from this ideal but recognize *and* theorize how this gap comes about or rather what this gap constitutes. I want to argue that an important way to do this is to recognize that arguments are *also* narrated and performed and thus put symbolic communication at the center of attention.

For a better understanding of mass-mediated deliberation I want to suggest to translate Habermas into empirical questions, drawing from works on media systems and extending it with a cultural sociological perspective. Obviously, this needs to happen from a cross-cultural comparative perspective in order to get at system-specific and transnational characteristics of news media cultures.

I will sketch the analytical frame in three steps, starting with theories of deliberative democracy, moving to field theory and the media systems perspective, and finishing with cultural sociology.

Habermas theory of the public sphere (Habermas 1991; 1996) provides three insights that are important in this context: 1) There used to be (the often challenged empirical claim in *Structural Transformation*) and there *should* be (the normative claim) a space where people (including elites) can come together, discuss matters of common concern and generate public opinion that acts as a force for demanding legitimation from the political elite. As Habermas later formulated, “public opinion represents political potentials that can be used for influencing the voting behavior of citizens or the will-formation in parliamentary bodies, administrative agencies, and courts.” (Habermas 1996: 363) This opens up a range of empirical questions that can be (and have been) utilized, on the structure of the public sphere(s), its institutional foundations, and how they vary in different national/cultural/ethnic, etc. contexts.

2) This space should, furthermore, be autonomous from state and market (and also the intimate sphere), based on principles of discourse ethics to facilitate preferably undistorted communication. 3) The political system, moreover, needs to be embedded in lifeworld contexts and thus has to stay open to communicative flows from the public and intimate

spheres. Most importantly, it needs to be open to impulses from the periphery, especially in non-routine situations or in order to *create* those non-routine situations (successfully thematizing problems). In other words: The political public sphere must encompass actors from center *and* periphery if needed and thus be susceptible to a range of different (public) opinions. As Habermas later argues, “the deliberative model expects the political public sphere to ensure the formation of a plurality of considered public opinions.” (Habermas 2006: 416)

What should be noted is that deliberation does not only take place in face-to-face interaction but in mediated form, in that people themselves engage with or at least witness others engage with media, consequently reflecting on and/or discussing the issues of concern within their own social network (this latter aspect was most prominently examined by Katz and Lazarsfeld 2006).

As Habermas argued, only through plurality, mediated deliberation can serve its cause for democracy

“to mobilize and pool relevant issues and required information, and to specify interpretations; to process such contributions discursively by means of proper arguments for and against; and to generate rationally motivated yes and no attitudes that are expected to determine the outcome of procedurally correct decisions.” (Habermas 2006:416)

Diversity within public debate and of different publics where these debates happen seems to be fairly universal normative undercurrent in different theories of and research on deliberative democracy (e.g. Benson 2009; Ferree et al. 2002; Jacobs 2000; Thompson 1995) that also led to specific political claims. John Thompson (1995), for instance, calls for „regulated pluralism“ and means legislative intervention in media industry to maintain diversity and plurality within the public sphere. Habermas himself made a similar argument in an Op-Ed, particularly concerning print media, and called for public trust funds for newspapers (Habermas 2007).

The question Habermas raises for this research: How are these public spheres structures in terms of diversity of voices and perspectives presented, as demonstrated in the cases of comparison. This has been suggested (Benson 2009; Ferree et al. 2002:232-236) as an alternative way to evaluate news discourse—as opposed to objectivity/bias or the degree of rationality—that is also better operationalizable. Measuring plurality of debate is one way to tackle discourse ethical principles, namely whether a given medium acts in the public sphere as advancing a range of different and partly opposing arguments, believing that the best one will win out in public deliberation (versus a more authoritative understanding of bringing forward the argument that it believes is right).

In a recent address to the field of communication studies, Habermas⁴ also calls attention to the power of media professionals in facilitating these processes of deliberation:

“Those who work in the politically relevant sectors of the media system ... cannot but exert power, because they select and process politically relevant content and thus intervene in both the formation of public opinions and the distribution of influential interests.” (Habermas 2006: 419)

⁴ At a presentation on June 20, 2006, at the 56th Annual International Communication Association Conference in Dresden, Germany.

Habermas does not problematize this power per se, as long as the media system is “self-regulating”, in other words: if it operates according to its own autonomous logic, which is the guiding principle or rather empirical question raised by the following theories of media systems.

Media Systems and Field Theory

A seminal theoretical and programmatic work on media systems research is Hallin & Mancini’s book *Comparing Media Systems* (2004). They distinguish three forms of media systems in the Western hemisphere, compared roughly by different market structures, degrees and forms of state intervention, and professionalization of the journalistic field. At the same time as media develop a distinctive media logic, they become ever more homogenous, converging toward the highly commercialized Anglo-American liberal system, they argue. Thus, European media become more market driven and more differentiated from the state over time (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 251-295). In an empirical study, comparing France and the US in the 1960s and 1990s, Benson and Hallin (2007) show, however, that significant national differences prevail, which suggests that national comparison of news is still a useful undertaking.

An important distinction Hallin and Mancini (2004: 29-30) make is between external and internal pluralism of media system, which is a consequence of how the media systems negotiates the multiplicity of circulating political ideologies. External pluralism means that *the* news media together achieves diversity through a range of media outlets, each representing certain perspectives and concerns within civil society. Internal pluralism means that each media outlet represents such diversity (and consequently outlets are more similar to each other).

The most significant theoretical innovation within media systems research joins the epistemological interest of public sphere with field theory and new institutionalism. (Benson 1999; Benson 2006; Benson and Neveu 2005; Rohlinger 2007) Here, media are viewed as a field of cultural production. As such it is torn between its own (autonomous) standards of “good journalism” (e.g. independence, intellectual rigor) and (heteronomous) external principles of evaluation (e.g. market penetration, political influence). Both are present simultaneously and compete for dominance, thus allowing for heterogeneity between and within fields. Different compositions of those two principles are found in different media systems and at different field positions within one media system. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) The field is also structured by its morphological constitution, especially by the characteristics (i.e. habitus) of its members and the balance between new agents striving to enter the field and old agents occupying more or less secure positions within it. The latter can have different implications on field dynamics, transformative or conservative, at different status levels of the journalistic field. (Benson 2005)

While Bourdieu (1998; 2005) does not have much to say about the effect of state influence, Benson’s version of field theory benefits from new institutionalist theories of media (Cook 1998; Sparrow 1999), which push the notion of journalists as political actors and as influenced by policies, political action, the structure of the political system, and political culture. Benson (2006) accommodates this insight in his model in an effort to account for the fact that state and market can enable as well as constrain autonomy of the journalistic field separately but not independently from each other and to account for the ontological priority of the state over other forms of power. Benson suggests to think of two opposing

heteronomous poles, each defined by an internal opposition to the state. Here, field autonomy is defined by 1) a tension between state and cultural/civic power (e.g. civic interests preserved / inhibited by state subsidies, regulations, etc.) and 2) tension between state and market (e.g. market de/regulation, tax policy, etc.). Journalistic autonomy acts as balancing power between these two bipolar heteronomous forces. Benson argues that “it is just as much a mistake to locate journalistic (or any other form of specific cultural) autonomy on the side of a paternalistic as on the side of a privatizing state.” (Benson 2006: 197)

While the struggle for autonomy is certainly existent (organizationally as well as in the lived reality of journalists), a problem with this theory is that it's not clear if and to what degree autonomy is *normatively desirable* (which is suggested by this approach). As Schudson (2005) rightly argued, we should avoid privileging journalistic autonomy without reservation and acknowledge that a certain tension to market and political influence might in fact be desirable. He pointed to the concern that autonomy may direct the field to self-referentiality and suggested that ongoing struggles for autonomy might actually be beneficial for the vitality of the public sphere.

To make the distinction, however, between journalism as field of cultural production and as a part of the field of power seems important.⁵ As a field of power, it is concerned with struggles for “the imposition of the dominant principle of domination” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:72n16). Bourdieu differentiates between structural relations (resulting from such power struggles) and effective relations, actualized in practice and different forms of exchange (ibid.:113). However, there is homology to be expected between these two relations as well as between the field of power and the field of cultural production (Bourdieu (1984:232) makes a similar argument about the field of cultural production and cultural consumption and demonstrates it empirically), as there is always correspondence between social and cognitive structures, symbolic systems, knowledge, etc., while all the latter embody the first. This means these different layers are connected to, shaped but not overdetermined by social structure. Likewise, actors are not locked in their field position but such a position allows different courses of actions and certain variability. In other words: the balance of domination within the field of power does not cause the news but has a considerable effect on the news.

As regards theoretical synthesis: Is it consistent to view news media as agents of fields and of public spheres at the same time? Within a field, the ultimate objective is status enhancement and maintenance while dominating others, though people might not always be conscious of those underlying motives (which brings the notion of false consciousness to mind). This suggests mutual exclusivity since it seems incongruous with Habermasian public sphere ideals of inclusiveness and rational critical debate. While it is questionable if journalists exclusively adhere to the ideal of a public sphere, it is obvious that they are at least partly motivated by such principles. Power struggles appear to run counter to these ideal commitments and the autonomization of a field furthermore suggests closure instead of openness and solidarity. Such ideals, however, materialize in autonomous principles of the

⁵ Organizationally, this distinction might be conceived as an internal division of media organizations, between editorial and marketing/distribution/publishing. This is not an analytical distinction but an actual distinction put in place (the same goes for the separation of news and opinion journalism, which is implemented in some news organizations as an actual communicative wall which does not allow one side to even talk to the other).

field, depending on how strongly the professional discourse is affected by them (the “objectivity norm” of US journalism could certainly be read this way).⁶ In real-life circumstances, though, they are always challenged by external forces.

To sum up, I argue that what media do is only partly explicable by power imperatives and that there are other professional, historical and even moral obligations that have an autonomous effect on what they do. Nonetheless, the analysis of the specific composition of heteronomous and autonomous forces is certainly helpful part of the way, in order to provide an explanatory context for different news outcomes. The empirical question addressed in this paper deriving from this: What are the main structural characteristics of the media systems under study, on what dimensions are they similar and different to each other, and what does this suggest about field autonomy? Furthermore, how do these characteristics relate to outcomes in news discourse?

Cultural Sociology

If the goal is to study media *cultures*, there is more to be done. The “strong program of cultural sociology”, initiated by Jeffrey Alexander and his students at the beginning of the 1990s, theorizes and studies culture empirically as an autonomous layer of social life since (Alexander and Smith 2003b). This theory suggests that, while institutions might operate according to instrumental goals and norms, they are also bound and motivated by what their cultural environment provides. It thus rejects Luhmann’s notion of autopoietic systems, a popular framework in German journalism studies, which are in exchange relations with their environment but reproduce themselves only according to their own logic (Luhmann 1995). While the environment might interpenetrate the system, these interpenetrations are incorporated into its operational logic and system change is ultimately an autopoietic process (Luhmann 1995:210-254). To the strong program, mass media, like other institution that constitutes the civil sphere communicatively, are rooted in the web of meaning of civil society as a whole which they articulate at the same time (Alexander 2006:75-85). In this sense it prefers the environment over the system (in Luhmann’s terms), and treats the “environment” (civil society) as the cultural arbiter of institutions.

This style of cultural sociology builds on the late Durkheimian sociology who understood religious life as organized by ritualistic and symbolic behavior, structured by the binary code of sacred and profane. (Durkheim and Fields 1995) Public discourse, from this perspective, is filled with cultural symbol systems, e.g. narratives, codes, myths, etc., which provide categories of meaning, identity and evaluation. It is a critical response to other approaches for which culture is only a means to something else. This disregards the possibility of cultural engagement for its own sake, for the understanding of which the strong program of cultural sociology provides a conceptual framework.

A cultural sociological approach recognizes that journalism has its own culture, which is based on a professional tradition, is structured, and has a relative autonomy towards other realms. In the first instance, it has to conceive this autonomous cultural structure in its own

⁶ Habermas is quite an active public intellectual in German newspapers and his theories are widespread, making them part of public discourse and particularly professional discourse in journalism, particularly as journalists are prime addressees of his ideas. To exemplify: In an interview, an editor/reporter of a Austrian weekly newspaper answered my question what he considered bad journalism by negating the conditions of rational-critical debate formulated by Habermas. When I expressed my surprise about his “invocation” of Habermas, he told me this was standard reading in his news organization.

terms and separate it analytically from other areas. (Alexander 1990) Only in the second instance, its causal power opposite to other layers of reality (e.g. social structure, power, knowledge) can be assessed—its *concrete* autonomy (Kane 1991). Since there is no formal licensing mechanism in journalism, a shared discourse and collective interpretation of issues are even more central cohesive elements of this “interpretive community” (Zelizer 1993) than in other professions. Jacobs (2005) argues that media understand their own role by a set of moral oppositions he defines as news versus entertainment, general versus particular interests, and nonpartisan versus advocacy (Luhmann (2000) suggests a singular code, information/non-information, as the basis of media operations).

Jeffrey Alexander points out in *The Civil Sphere* (2006:75-85), that media’s role in civil society is twofold: One is setting the communicative boundaries between civil society and what he calls noncivil domains (e.g. state, market, law, and also the intimate sphere). Boundaries speak to the dual nature of civil discourse, since boundaries always have inclusive and exclusive (or distinctive) qualities. By setting up these boundaries, media provide criteria of meaning and belonging.

Secondly, Alexander argues that media give meaning to the occurrences that happen in the world around us. Media do this by selecting and discursively embedding these occurrences in civil discourse. Alexander and Smith have argued that this discourse is based on a cultural code distinguishing democratic sacred and antidemocratic profane (2003a). In public debates, actors on both (or more) sides of a conflict utilize this code to condemn the other side’s cause. Journalists establish links between this discourse and “the seemingly random outpouring of social events” by “purifying and polluting motives, relations, and institutions.” (Alexander 2006: 81) Thus, news media create and reproduce meaning and attribute significance to the immense amount of events that happen in the world around us.

Bourdieu argued that “symbolic systems are not simply instruments of knowledge, they are *also* instruments of domination.” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:13; my italics). In this spirit, I argue that both perspectives to understand and to study culture, as a means for itself and as a means to something else, are right and not mutually exclusive. Just to give a crude example: It is conceivable that listening to Arnold Schönberg is a fulfilling experience for me in its own terms but that I also enjoy setting myself apart from Tschaikowski fans at the same time.

I would like to show that combining these theories provides a more complete picture of news media: Habermas is certainly the source of cognitive interest for a lot of media research as well as for Alexander’s theory of civil society. While discourse ethics and rational-critical debate are normative ideals that have real consequences in public discourse, it is also striking that the best argument often does not win but instead the most authentic cultural performance based on powerful symbolic codes. Finally, this argument of cultural competence seems incomplete without acknowledging the social hierarchies of symbolic production and the fact that such performances tend to come from specific locations of the social space.

From this perspective, the two cases are analyzed in terms of: What are the narrative dynamics as the drama progresses, events happen, and new actors are put on the scene? Which narratives are successful at different locations of the journalistic field and why? Do these contrary newspapers draw symbolic boundaries between civil and noncivil domains differently, even though they are in basic agreement on the issue at hand? Furthermore, what

expectations are raised through different narrative constructions in different locations of the public sphere?

Data and Methods

It might seem unusual to study these distinct media cultures based on two *different* case studies, given that there are plenty of media events and stories covered globally. This approach is based on the assumption that in a world where national borders still matter not only legally but also politically and culturally, issues that are most salient, intensely debated, and closely contested concern the world within these boundaries.⁷ Such highly mass-mediated issues are most suitable to reveal capabilities and potentials of public spheres and often draw self-reflection from journalists and evaluation by others about the role of media within civil society. Indicators for salience are, most basically, a high amount of coverage, the politicization of the specific case and issues connected to it, and social protest resulting from it, which is given in both cases of comparison:

US: The almost six-year-old Elián González travels in a boat from Cuba to the US with his mother and stepfather in November of 1999. During the crossing his mother and stepfather as well as all other passengers except two others die. Elián is taken in by his relatives in Miami who start a custody war with his Cuban father and family. The family struggle quickly turns into a political conflict within the US (between Cuban-Americans and the US government, Democrats and Republicans) and between the US and Cuba, which was accompanied (and spurred) by a remarkable media circus. Media attention climaxes when federal agents seize Elián from his Miami family's home. What resonates throughout this case is a debate about communism and capitalism, during a time when the Cold War is considered over.

Austria: Arigona Zogaj from Kosovo enters Austrian soil in 2002 but after a series of unsuccessful asylum cases and applications for residency an order for extradition of the family is issued by the interior ministry at the end of 2007. Arigona eludes deportation and threatens the Austrian government with suicide if her family is not brought back. This initiated a far-reaching debate about (illegal) immigration, law of foreigners, integration, and national identity. Arigona had to leave the country in mid July 2010 after 2.5 years of legal and political struggles as all legal means for her to stay have been exhausted and rejected. On November 24th 2010 the former "illegal immigrant" legally re-entered the country together with her family.

The combining element of these cases is that they are *social dramas* and they inspired not only a flow of stories about individual tragedies (human interest stories) but far-reaching political discussions. These discussions go well beyond the narrower problem, which is quite simple at its core, namely: should these people stay or leave. As Victor Turner (1974: 38-42) outlined, social dramas involve: *Breaches* of norm-governed behavior, *crisis* that threatens to extend those breaches, *redressive action* that alleviates and keeps the crisis from spreading, and *reintegration*, which consists of either reintegrating the affected social group or at least recognizing and legitimizing divisions between that group and another group / the majority

⁷ War is a borderline case in this sense but would require equal involvement and stakes within the nations under study.

in order for the collective conscience to reach some form of catharsis. In both cases, the social drama starts with individual suffering, which symbolically transcends to represents the predicaments of an entire group of people.

Another important precondition is that in both instances either newspaper under study takes the same position on the narrower problem, that is: Let Arigona Zogaj stay; reunite Elián González with his father in Cuba. This is noteworthy as a) politics could not have been more divided about those cases, b) the newspapers in each context are most-different cases in terms of editorial concepts and political standing. The succeeding arguments they made, however, differed significantly from each other. Furthermore, both cases endured over a longer period of time⁸ and include expected and unexpected events as well as phases of no events at all, from the point of view of journalists. This means that there was at least a possibility for media gates to open to actors from civil society (Dayan and Katz 1992; Molotch and Lester 1975) as well as for journalistic initiative (enterprise or investigative reporting) and thus a lively debate involving a range of different viewpoints. The issues touched were far-reaching enough (politically, legally, academically, communicatively, etc.) for different perspectives to be included into the debate.

Following Robert Park's argument that "every public has its own universe of discourse and that ... a fact is only a fact in some universe of discourse" (Park 1940: 679), I selected papers that are as different from each other as possible to be able to map the respective media system they are a part of. In the US, I chose the *New York Times* (375 articles) and the *New York Post* (336), in Austria *Der Standard* (297) and *Neue Kronen Zeitung* (103), together 1111 articles. I used simple search routines ("Arigona Zogaj", "Elián González"). Some of the surveyed articles focused on other issues but mentioned the cases. These stories were used for the narrative analysis, since it is important to see how Arigona Zogaj and Elián González are used as symbols in other contexts, but not for the more standardized content analysis. While the selection of newspapers is based on difference – a liberal broadsheet opposite a conservative tabloid – these papers also address different social structurally defined audiences.⁹

It should be noted that *Krone* is the biggest newspaper in the world in terms of market share (except the dominant paper in Lichtenstein, *Liechtensteiner Vaterland*), which is about 44%. Furthermore, the ten year time difference could be seen problematic, considering the technological developments of news media that happened in between. Several factors deserve to be mentioned here, which speak to the fact that the nominal time difference seems greater than the actual: US media are usually considered technologically most advanced, suggesting a time lag as regards Austria. For instance, the blogosphere is not nearly as advanced in Austria nowadays than in the US and traditional news outlets have not moved online to such a degree as in the US. In the case of *Standard*, separate editorial offices deal with the print product and the webpage (in fact they are separate companies), while articles from the former are published on the latter. Journalists working for the paper,

⁸ Although the Elián González case only roughly took seven months from the day he was found until the day he left the US, there was more coverage than in the Zogaj case which lasted a little over 2.5 years. There are several reasons for this, one of which is certainly that Elián was paraded in front of the media while Arigona was shielded from media access.

⁹ In terms of education, the *Times* as an index of parity (compared to the population) of higher educated readers of 249, data for the *Post* is missing (but its main competitor, *The Daily News*, has an index of 95, according to Benson 2009), *Standard* 329, and *Krone* 47.

consequently, are widely “traditional” journalists as their American colleagues were in 1999/2000. *Krone*’s web presence is quite underdeveloped and journalists working for the paper only work for the paper as well.

The first central component of the content analysis is to code the institutional fields which actors who are quoted or paraphrased are associated with in articles as a way to measure diversity of debate and multiperspectivalness of reporting. Here I am replicating a distinction suggested by Rodney Benson (2009).¹⁰ I am also drawing from Benson’s idea to measure ideological diversity, based on a distinction of argumentative frames. Based on a first reading of the data, I identified frames which are used to make claims at different points or throughout the cases. In the second systematic reading I coded occurrences of those frames in the articles. What I would like to argue is that a standardized content analysis of frames can be enriched by more interpretive forms of textual analysis to capture the full richness of a debate, especially in a coherent case in contrast to a structural sample of issues-based coverage (the established sampling strategy). Focusing on the symbolic level of discourse, an analysis of semiotic oppositions and narratives proves to be as an effective tool to study news and expose the cultural layer of public discourse. I used a QDA program to code sections of articles that speak to respective frames and narratives, which I then read selectively and comparatively.

As regards framing analysis, I would like to show that there is a gap between the initial definition of the concept and its application in empirical research and that narrative analysis is consistent with the former but not with the latter. Building on Goffman’s magnum opus *Frame Analysis*, which took phenomenological interest in the “organization of experience” in face-to-face interaction (mostly, but not exclusively), Snow and Benford (1988:207-211) argue that in mediated communication frames need to correspond with the life world in order to be successful. Besides connecting to actual events and practical experience, a condition for frames to impact public discourse is when they have “narrative fidelity”, that is, when they resonate with cultural structures (Gamson 1988:227 makes a similar point). They still underestimate the latter, however, by disregarding that we understand and communicate events and experiences through narrative and that these occurrences always have cultural significance themselves. While they don’t have a theory of cultural structures, there is an awareness of it a narrative analysis can build on. Benson and Saguy’s (2005) work provides an empirical example, which follows this route half way. They demonstrate that frames invoking civil solidarity are more successful in France because they resonate with its cultural repertoire. We learn what issues relate to this repertoire but we learn nothing *how* these issue relate to it on a symbolic level and how this is communicated. (*criticize one more example from soc. journal, maybe Ferree 2003)

¹⁰ The distinguished fields are: 1) executive/bureaucratic (e.g. federal/state government, state administration, etc.), 2) judicial (e.g. supreme court judges, lawyers (if they are not associated with a particular client but speak for the judicial system or the rule of law as a whole), 3) center legislative (legislators from a central political party (in the U.S.: Democratic or Republican, in Austria: the parties of the ruling coalition), 4) center political party (other party functionaries from central political parties), 5) peripheral political parties (e.g. US: Green Party, Austria: oppositional parties), 6) trade unions, 7) religious, 8) research/education (schools, universities, also physicians), 9) association (also including NGOs, clubs, etc), 10) journalistic (media organizations), 11) arts/entertainment, 12) business, 13) foreign/international (people/representatives from other countries or international organizations, such as the UN or OSCE), 14) individual immigrant (this also includes lawyers who speak for their clients (and not for their profession or “the law”), 15) individual citizens, 16) public opinion (polls).

The way I coded frames follows Gamson (1988:220-221) in suggesting that frames exists in a dialectic relation to counterframes, and invoking one always makes the other also relevant. Based on the assumption that both are internalized, the offer of one can invoke the other in perception of audiences. Consequently, I coded the dismissal *and* acceptance of a frame likewise as a representations of the frame. For instance, the *New York Post* might denounce a claim I am in favor of with a counterclaim. However, this might even amplify my conviction in the dismissed claim. This is not to say that how issues are interpreted in the news is irrelevant but it suggests that the existence of an issue comes first and interpretation second.

Furthermore, in contrast to other comparable studies on abortion (Ferree et al. 2002) immigration (Benson 2009), and immigration and sexual harassment (Benson and Saguy 2005), which analyze structured samples of issue-based coverage, the case studies discussed here emerge from a particular event and people and advance ongoing, more situated narratives. They lend themselves to a microscopic analysis of social discourse in order to “draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts”, a thick description in Geertz’ sense (1973:28). While it is certainly true that audiences, whose basis of deliberation provided by media is the ultimate question of above-mentioned as well as this study, follow issues over time they follow stories even more. The cases at hand focus on individual predicaments, which serve as symbolically charged centers that emanate more gripping debates, provide opportunity for identification, and more intensive engagement with connected issues.

This leads me to narrative: While it might be the case that US political news is more personalized and thus more narrative-prone than in Europe (Ferree et al. 2002; Wessler 2008), the cases at hand lend themselves to narrativization. The hermeneutic analysis, first of all, looks for semiotic opposition since it is the basis of meaning-making and moral evaluation of characters and actions. These oppositions may be conceived as classifications of sacred and profane attributes or as symbolic boundaries differentiating worthy from unworthy, similarity from difference, etc. However, they are expressed through representational systems, narrative being one such system. Following Jacobs (1996), these narratives can be disentangled according to: 1) *Plot*, which involves choices and evaluations of different events, and provides a basis for new events to be embedded in (emplotment). (Abbott 1992; Somers and Gibson 1994; Steinmetz 1992); 2) How *characters* within these narratives – who at times are identical with the narrators of the stories – are contrasted with each other as heroes and villains. In public discussions, which are often delivered in a polarizing manner, actors make use of a binary code to purify themselves and their allies and pollute others (Alexander 1992). 3) *Genre*: apart from these structural components, narrations are not arbitrary but orient towards archetypes, for instance tragedy, romance, comedy, irony (Frye 2000: 198-239; Jacobs and Smith 1997), which raise different expectations about the course of events and its outcomes, even though they are not stated directly. In news, as opposed to literature, there are always several narratives competing with each other for interpretative authority over events (Jacobs 2001).

Structural analysis of Media Systems

Characteristics of the Journalistic Field

I want to give a brief overview of some characteristics of the specific media system under discussion: Table 1 shows several indicators that speak to different internal and external

conditions that affect the journalistic field. While they are certainly far from exhaustive, they do get a sense of some important differences. Firstly, I need to make one careful assumption: One important indicator, namely commercialization or market influence (measured by the proportion of revenues from advertising compared to sales (direct sales and subscriptions)) is not included simply because this data does not exist in Austria, neither for the newspaper industry as a whole nor for individual dailies.¹¹ Typically, the American newspaper market is more commercialized than the Western European market. For instance, while US newspapers gained 73,6% of revenues from advertisement in 2007, in Germany it was 51%, in France only 38% (relative to sales revenues). The data for advertising in Table 1 suggests two things: There is about 50% more expenditure on advertisement in the US as in Austria in general, *but* of that total expenditure more is invested in newspaper advertising in Austria proportionally than in other venues (about 100% more than in the US). This and comparison of newspaper advertising data and % of revenues in UK, Germany, and France (those two indicators tend to be correlated), leads me to the careful assumption that the Austrian newspaper market seems highly commercialized as well.

In the literature, high commercialization is associated to less coverage generated by official sources in favor of coverage initiated by journalists (Benson and Saguy 2005). It suggests more criticism against the government (Hallin and Mancini 2004), although research also indicates that closeness between the journalistic and political field does not prevent criticism (Benson 2010; Benson and Hallin 2007). Conversely, low commercialization and consequently more audience support is associated with more substantive and pluralistic debate in news coverage. There are conflicting views on the effect of state subsidies, which do exist in Austria but not in the US. One perspective sees it as enabling for rich debate and different viewpoints (Baker 2002; Curran 1991), the other as restrictive and as making media financially dependent from the state and thus more deferential towards it (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

As we see in Table 1, Austria is the exact opposite of the US in terms of market concentration. High concentration of media markets is usually associated with lower overall ideological diversity. (Bagdikian 2000) Measures of professionalization can be taken as an indicator for the journalistic field's inertia against heteronomous influences. Since the first academic degree program in journalism in Austria was only introduced in 2002, this means that the possible employed graduates were not captured in the study published in 2007 this data is based on (Kaltenbrunner et al. 2007). Another possible measure would be to what degree journalism is organized in associations and trade unions. It is an ambiguous measure, however, since it is not clear whether it indicates professionalization or political organization.¹² Additionally, this more recent development has historical implications,

¹¹ I also confirmed this with several way more experienced media researchers in Austria who have been trying to get this kind of data for years.

¹² According to my own calculations, the percentage of journalists who are members of a journalistic trade union is 36% in Austria. (number of trade union members was 2569 in 2007, according to Hummel, Roman. 2009. "Strukturveränderungen im österreichischen Journalismus und Auswirkungen auf den Arbeitsmarkt." Pp. 30-36 in *Journalismus in Österreich*, edited by Abteilung Journalistik des Fachbereichs Kommunikationswissenschaft der Universität Salzburg, Salzburg: University of Salzburg. The number of journalists in Austria is 4100, according to Kaltenbrunner, Andy, Matthias Karmasin, Daniela Kraus, and Astrid Zimmermann. 2007. *Der Journalisten-Report: Österreichs Medien und ihre Macher. Eine empirische Erhebung* Wien: Facultas.WUV.) Incidentally, the same percentage (36%) has been estimated for the US (Weaver, David H., and Wei Wu. 1998. *The Global Journalist: News People Around the World*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.)

namely, that there is no history of journalistic education that could have developed some form professional canon providing specific role expectations, ethical criteria of news work, let alone academic journals on journalism (as in the US). Besides that, the overall level of education of journalists is very low in compared to the US where 82% hold some form of college degree, compared to only 34% in Austria. It should be added here that the average level of high school education is higher in Austria, education in general less stratified, university education is for free, and there are more college dropouts.

Finally, the political system is expected to have a significant effect on the news. In multiparty systems, such as Austria, political parties and consequently party ideologies play a greater role in public debates than in biparty systems, such as the US, which is less ideological. Where party ideologies are more important, different media align closer to these, which is what Hallin and Mancini called political parallelism (2004: 26-30).

Table 1 Media System Data¹³

			USA	Austria
Advertising	Advertising Expenditure ^a	%GDP	1.31%	0.87%
	Newspaper Advertising ^a	% of all Advertising Expenditure	20%	39%
State Subsidies	Direct Subsidies ^a	Million €	-	12.8
Market Concentration		N of Paid-For Newspapers ^a	1437	17
		N of Newspapers / Population in mill ^b	4.67	2.13
	Readers ^a	% of all adults	49.9%	72.7%
		Top 3 Dailies Shared Circulation	9.9% ^{b, c}	65.1% ^{b, d}
		Top 8 Dailies Shared Circulation	15.5% ^{b, c}	91.4% ^{b, d}
Professionalization	Education	% Holding College Degrees	82% ^e	34% ^f
	Spec. Education	% Holding Journalism Degree	45% ^e	0% ^f
Political System			Biparty/ Plurality	Multiparty/ Proportionality

¹³ References: ^a World Association of Newspapers. 2007. "World press trends 2007." Paris, France: World Association of Newspapers. ^b own calculations. ^c NAA, Newspapers Association of America. 2010. "Total Paid Circulation, <http://www.naa.org/TrendsandNumbers/Total-Paid-Circulation.aspx> (accessed 06/28/2010)." vol. 2010. Arlington, VA: Newspapers Association of America. ^d ÖAK, Österreichische Auflagenkontrolle. 2009. "Auflagenliste: Roulender Jahresschnitt 2008/2009." Verein Österreichische Gemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern / Österreichische Auflagenkontrolle (ÖAK), Vienna. ^e Weaver, David H. 2007. *The American Journalist in the 21st Century: U.S. News People at the Dawn of a New Millennium*. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates. ^f Kaltenbrunner, Andy, Matthias Karmasin, Daniela Kraus, and Astrid Zimmermann. 2007. *Der Journalisten-Report: Österreichs Medien und ihre Macher. Eine empirische Erhebung*. Wien: Facultas.WUV.

Plurality of Public Discourse

DIVERSITY OF VOICES

Benson (2009) provides a way to measure “multiperspectivalness” (Gans [1979] 2004) of news. As I already mentioned above, this is suggested as an evaluative criteria of news discourse in lieu of the formerly prevalent indicators of news bias. Instead of focusing on how news delivers partial views and hence assuming audiences are helplessly exposed to this partiality, it centers on what is being presented and what is left out in comparison.

A second person coded a 5% subsample. The average value of Cohen’s Kappa for 13 of the 16 items that produced significant correlation measures was .70, thus an acceptable degree of intercoder reliability can be assumed.¹⁴ The data reported in Table 2 are measured over article ensembles, following Benson. The idea is that one issue of a newspaper often combines several articles on a particular topic, including a front page story, articles on several facets and interests, editorial, and guest commentary, etc. For issues with only one articles, the single article is the unit of analysis. For measuring field diversity I excluded opinion articles (editorials, columns, Op-Eds), however, since they do not involve as much reporting (if at all) but make analytic statements, claims, evaluations, take political position, and might only quote or paraphrase selectively. It is simply not their job to do that and including them would mean that part of the variation would be explicable by the relative amount of opinion a paper provides on the case, which would miss the point. In terms of substantive pluralism (i.e. frame diversity), however, it will be interesting to look at opinion as well since these articles *do* put forward different arguments, although usually in a clearly evaluative fashion. Besides that, for all numbers reported in this section I filtered out articles that do not mainly deal with the respective case. These articles, however, will be of interest in the narrative analysis.

Before moving on to the comparison, it should be noted that *Krone* generally tends not to quote sources as often as the other papers (which is in itself revealing). Often times stories report different positions on issues (e.g. of political parties or a governmental bodies) and actions taken by institutions but don’t quote or paraphrase specific actors.

¹⁴ As both cases apply the same measure for fields, I computed one measure across both cases for each item.

Table 2 Field Diversity¹⁵

	N	Mean	Av. Ensemble Length	Official	Civil Society	Populist
	Ensembles	Fields Presented per Ensemble	Words per Ensemble	Present in % of all Articles		
New York Times	107	3.5	1642	63.7%	45.6%	47.4%
New York Post	126	3.2	760	57.0%	40.1%	52.3%
Der Standard	97	2.9	520	79.4%	50.5%	23.7%
Kronen Zeitung	62	1.3	186	54.8%	25.8%	16.1%

Table 2 reveals two main observations: First, even though the *New York Times* provides the greatest variety of viewpoints in terms of giving voice to representatives of various institutional fields, given the comparatively vast space they (used to) have at their disposal (measured in words per ensemble), it is relatively low. Secondly, the difference within each media space is much bigger in the Austrian case than in the U.S. case. Whereas the *Times* represents 10% more institutional fields per ensemble on average than the *Post*, *Standard* represents 123% more institutional fields than *Krone*. This difference is still large considering that a *Times* ensemble is 2.2 times longer than a *Post* ensemble while a *Standard* ensemble is 2.8 times longer than in *Krone*, which almost always means single articles in the latter case. Measured over articles instead of ensembles, the *Standard* matches the *Times*. What this suggests is that in terms of plurality of different voices, in the US broadsheet and tabloid are more alike than in Austria.

The institutional fields can be divided in three categories, official (1-5), civil society (6-11), and populist (14-16), meaning voices from the public without institutional belonging. This leaves out businesses (which are practically irrelevant in these cases anyways) and foreign/international, which cannot be classified in either group. Counting representations of these three groups over all articles reveals that in Austria there is a greater dominance of official voices in both papers (keeping in mind that *Krone* is more “self-sufficient” in terms of citing in general). The other striking comparison is that the US papers are far more populist than the Austrian counterparts, which corresponds to Benson’s findings in the French-American comparison. (Benson 2009) First of all, this can be seen positively in a sense that normal citizens are represented more in the news. On the other hand, this allows for more selectivity in terms of which opinion to give representation on the side of the journalist (who usually do not draw structured samples).

Concerning comparison between different categories of institutional fields (table not reported here), there are several more or less surprising variations: 1) Both broadsheets give more voice to the judicial field (both cases have a strong legal component to them). 2) Corresponding to the different political systems, party functionaries are more represented in both Austrian papers while they are practically absent in the US papers. The same can be

¹⁵ Opinion articles excluded.

said for peripheral parties. 3) Differences within religious institutions (more present in Austria) and foreign/international voices (more present in the US) have to do with specificities of the cases. One of Arigona Zogaj's closest associates is a priest and part of the conflict around Elián was between Cuba and the US (the Zogaj case is merely a domestic dispute). 4) The *Times* has by far the highest representation of the research/education field (in 27% of all articles), which consists mostly of academics. Even the *Post* gives more voice to that field than either Austrian paper. 5) One of the most striking dissimilarities can be found in the group of individual immigrants. They are represented very strongly in both American papers (40% in *Times* and 48% in the *Post*) and less so in Austria (21% in *Standard* and 10% in *Krone*). This is surely partly explicable by specificities of the cases: The Cuban-American lobby is a strong political constituent, especially in Florida, which explains why the political sphere cared about the Elián case in the first place. Elián's family in Miami was surrounded by a group of PR specialists and lawyers who orchestrated media events and pushed their cause in the media. The only two reason why individual immigrants got *any* voice in the Zogaj case was, firstly, the suicide threat of Arigona, which was broadcasted on TV and her claim repeatedly quoted in the later coverage and, secondly, the Zogajs' lawyer who acted as their spokesperson later on (Arigona and her family hardly appeared then). Lawyers for Arigona and Elián (or rather his family, who claimed to speak in his interests) were coded as "individual immigrants", since they spoke for their clients instead of their institutional field.

Another aspect of comparison is how news stories are generated or rather: the agenda setting of news. I distinguished so-called "enterprise stories"—articles based on journalistic initiative (investigative, background, feature stories, and verbatim interviews fall in this category)—from those initiated externally, other-directed stories. The latter case is divided in official and civil society to be able to see to what degree journalists respond to official versus civil society concerns (here this also includes non-affiliated citizens).¹⁶ This is not to say that journalists *ought* to initiate their own stories. Of course they need to respond and document what is happening in our world and what is talked about out there. Ideally, however, they also ask their own questions about issues and work on getting answers on these questions, especially when the issue at hand is an enduring story. Excluding opinion pieces, comparing the four newspapers reveals that news stories in the Austrian case are more often generated by official initiation than in the American case (Table 3). Around 25% of stories are journalistic initiatives in all dailies except *Krone*, where journalists only instigated 12% of all stories about the Zogaj case. In the cases at hand tabloids responded more to civil society concerns than broadsheets, with a less dramatic gap again in the US.

¹⁶ While journalists are considered actors of civil society, this distinction aims at how accessible news is to other actors in civil society opposite the state.

Table 3 Impulse of Stories¹⁷

	Official	Journalistic	Civil society
Times	48.4%	26.5%	23.7%
Post	38.4%	26.6%	32.5%
Standard	50.0%	25.7%	18.8%
Krone	50.7%	11.6%	31.9%

Looking back at the structural predictors, the following conclusions can be made: Assuming both media systems as highly commercialized, all (except *Krone*) have a fairly high percentage of enterprise stories. The field diversity results furthermore support the argument by Hallin and Mancini (2004) that media system in Western and Northern Europe (they subsume as the Democratic-Corporatist Model) are closer to the political field and show a higher degree of political parallelism, which means that news are more dominated by political divisions within society, and by official debates in general. This also corresponds to Ferree and colleagues' conclusions for the German-US comparison (Ferree et al. 2002). Consequently, it provides less access to civil society actors. Lastly, differing degrees of professionalization (measured by journalistic education) also support these findings, meaning the Austrian journalistic field has less strong autonomous principles of distinction and less cultural inertia against external influence.

DIVERSITY OF ARGUMENTS

Before moving to the interpretation of the results in Table 4, a few qualifications are in place: Comparing frame diversity across these two cases is problematic, since I applied different measures (unlike fields) to each of them. Besides, there are also different numbers of them (18 in the US case, 20 in the Austrian case). As with the coding of fields, I conducted an intercoder reliability test with a 5% subsample of each case with a second coder. Cohen's Kappa was .72 on average for the Zogaj case, .55 for the González case.¹⁸

The data in Table 4 should be read as comparing the two news outlets in each nation and from that drawing conclusions to the national comparison. What should also be noted is that some of these frames are more similar or different to each other, in other words: A higher number of frames does not necessarily mean a more diverse debate. This is not to say that this is a useless measure, also considering that media are inherently interested in conflict and thus a presentation of polar opposite frames is more likely than two similar. It should alert to the fact that it is, as all quantitative indicators trying to capture the messiness of the social

¹⁷ Opinion articles excluded.

¹⁸ The fact that I coded the cases chronologically and had more context knowledge than the second person who coded a random subsample of the case contributed to the low correlation. The higher value in the Zogaj case is due to the fact that it was a smaller sample size and some of the items either not significant or, more often, did not include variation to be measures. While this is statistically sound, an agreement between the coders that a code does not apply to any of the cases in the subsample is a positive result not captured by this test.

world, simplifying and insufficient in its own terms. For example, it doesn't tell about how elaborate the argument is presented. Thus I would like to refer to the next section for more depth.

Furthermore, I included a measure for dominant position each article presents. Besides the fact that both cases discuss a multitude of different problems, there is a very basic question in each: Should Elián/Arigona be allowed to stay or is it likely that s/he will stay respectively. This can either be expressed by taking a stance or giving one side more voice than the other or prognosis favoring one over the other. The remainder to 100% are articles that were neutral or gave equal weight. Intercoder reliability for this measure was .65 in the González case, .49 in the Zogaj case.

Table 4 Frame diversity¹⁹

	N	Mean	Av. Ensemble Length	Dominant Position
	Ensembles / Articles	Frames per Ensemble / Article	Words per Ensemble / Article	leaving / staying, percent of articles
Times	111 / 259	4.9 / 3.4	1642 / 817	48.3% / 13.9%
Post	128 / 290	4.1 / 2.6	760 / 404	39.7% / 19.7%
Standard	111 / 202	3.8 / 2.7	689 / 378	11.4% / 52.0%
Krone	73 / 92	2.2 / 1.9	234 / 186	18.5% / 39.1%

As expected, frame diversity was higher in the *Times* than in the *Post*, although the difference is not as dramatic as in the Austrian case. It is constant on the ensemble compared to the article level, which means the difference is proportionally greater for the latter. *Standard* on average offers 73% more arguments as *Krone* in one issue of the paper that discusses the Zogaj case. As *Standard* tended to cover this issue regularly over the whole period of investigation with short announcements, looking only at critical moments might even increase the difference. Both US papers covered the much shorter-lasting Elián González case more evenly, ruled out such a difference.

Considering the dominant position of news stories, interestingly around 40% of articles in all four papers were neutral or gave equal weight to the two core stances respectively. The highlighted percentage is the stance each newspaper admitted to early on in the debates. One conclusion is that both tabloids did not persist or push their standpoint as much as the broadsheets. This can have several reasons: In both cases, the papers took an opposing position to their usual political constituents, the conservatives. Furthermore, as tabloids usually orient more towards mass markets and general appeal, ideological adherence might be less important than responding to the (perceived or measured) social climate. Lastly, an emphasis on entertainment and thus on conflict might also, paradoxically, lead to a more ecumenical attitude in terms of presenting the particular sides of the conflict in news coverage.

¹⁹ 18 different frames were distinguished in the Elián González case, 20 in the Arigona Zogaj case; includes opinion articles.

The next section will deal with discourse more closely, starting in each case with the distinguished frames, their prominence and a brief interpretation of these results, which will be deepened in the narrative analysis. As mentioned above, both procedures are used complementarily. While frames more clearly distinguish argumentative claims (and their salience), narratives can capture how these claims are condensed to overarching stories which touch on a different level of mediation than frames.

Arigona Zogaj: Unintended Integration (Austria)

Frame analysis

In the initial inductive reading of the 304 articles (up until that point) I identified 20 dominant frames which were used by different participants of the debate to make arguments, evaluate persons and their actions involved in the Arigona Zogaj case. They were dominant in a sense that they either occurred often overall, accumulated at a specific point, or were important for the ongoing debate. Frames were used to make arguments on three levels: about immigration laws (legal frames), about political action (politics frames), and about immigrants (immigrant frames). Additionally, there are two stand-alone frames, which concerns the broader societal problem of xenophobia and meta-media commentary.

Legal frames: 1) *Immigration country*: This frame suggests that Austria represents an immigration country and that it should therefore admit to that. This is often times backed by transnational (EU, UN) and human right considerations. 2) *Legal provisions*: The issue is that “law is the law” and has to be executed and is mostly put forward by politicians of the ruling government as a defensive strategy not to engage further in the debate. 3) *Invitation*: This suggests that a softening of asylum and immigration laws would cause a flood of immigrants which Austria is not able to handle. 4) *Administrative reform*: This concerns reforming the administrative proceedings to grant or deny asylum. 5) *Legal certainty*: This involves arguments for humanitarian right of residence and other proposals for legislative reform, improving the legal situation for asylum seekers and other foreigners. 6) *Mercy*: This is a more limited claim of clemency based on good-will of the government to amnesty hardship cases.

Politics frames: 1) *Inhumanity*: Statements that frame politicians and political action as inhumane, merciless, immoral and as violating human rights. 2) *Bureaucrat*: The issue is that politicians and political action are defined as spineless, inflexible, regionalist and as adhering to the party line. 3) *Favorableness*: Complaisant interpretation of political actions, which might be wrong but are framed as a consequence of the difficulty of the situation. 4) *Opportunism*: Interpreting actions as motivated by political gain and partisan advantage. 5) *Abuse of authority*: The issue concerns actual legal misconduct by politicians who are utilizing their power to realize their interests at the expense of others (who are less powerful).

Immigrant frames: 1) *Integrated* (or willing to be integrated): Statements which label immigrants as well- or fully integrated, as willing to be integrated, or that use indicators to make such an argument, e.g. language proficiency, academic achievements, sympathy or even advocacy by their community. 2) *Resistance*: Characterizing immigrants as being able to defend themselves and fighting against hardship, particularly from state authorities. 3) *Vulnerable*: Describing immigrants’ (mental) health as impaired by adversities (associated with their immigrant status) and as unstable to argue they are in need of protection. 4) *Economic refugee*: Statements which accuse immigrants of abuse of asylum and of being bogus asylum

seekers. 5) *Outlaw*: Accusing immigrants of (former) delinquent or deceptive behavior, emphasizing their *illegal* immigration and that they paid criminals (coyotes) to enter the country. 6) *Blackmailing*: Statements denouncing immigrants for blackmailing the state (i.e. by suicide threats). 7) *Personal attack*: Criticism against immigrants based on personal traits or their personal life.

Xenophobia frame: Statements which either use xenophobia as an explanatory context for the situation of immigrant or characterize this situation as symptomatic for general resentments against foreigners, which is also related to Austria's Nazi past.

Metacommentary frame: The issue centers on the discussion of media and public debate of the case itself, which the intensity of coverage and conflict seems to necessitate.

Table 5 Zogaj - Overall Frame Prominence

		Standard	Krone
Legal Frames	Immigration Country	9.9%	3.3%
	Legal Provisions	14.4%	20.7%
	Invitation	5.0%	0.0%
	Administrative Reform	5.0%	14.1%
	Mercy	23.3%	17.4%
	Legal Certainty	19.8%	10.9%
Politics Frames	Inhumanity	44.6%	21.7%
	Bureaucrat	20.3%	9.8%
	Favorableness	2.5%	7.6%
	Abuse of Authority	14.9%	1.1%
	Opportunism	15.3%	4.3%
Immigrant Frames	Integrated	29.7%	21.7%
	Economic Refugee	5.4%	6.5%
	Outlaw	8.9%	27.2%
	Resistance	11.4%	9.8%
	Blackmailing	7.4%	1.1%
	Personal Attack	5.9%	5.4%
	Vulnerable	12.4%	8.7%
	Xenophobia	12.9%	0.0%
	Metacommentary	34.7%	20.7%

Table 5 shows the distribution of frames in both news outlets. In the legal category, different political goals of the newspapers are given unequal weight: Whereas calls for mercy are prominent in both outlets but even more so in *Standard*, demands for broader legal changes (in this case: relaxing immigration law), especially humanitarian right of residence, were more often quoted and expressed in news commentary in *Standard*. Since parliamentary debates in the first year mostly dealt with humanitarian right of residence, news coverage in *Krone* also features this frame quite often but not in terms of arguing for it. *Krone* instead pushes for mercy for well-integrated hardship cases and actively argues for administrative reform in order to accelerate asylum proceedings and avoid more such cases in the future. This is by and large coherent with its ongoing campaign for state-wide administrative reform and the campaign against unwanted asylum seeker (who could be faster extradited this way).

There is more criticism against politicians in *Standard* (represented by all politics frames, except favorableness), particularly the government and ruling coalition of social democrats and conservatives. One explanation for this is that *Krone's* coverage of the Zogaj case is typical for a tabloid in terms of more emphasis on human interest stories and less on politics compared to *Standard*. Another reason could be political parallelism in a sense that *Krone*, where crime stories are always on top of the agenda, cultivates good relations to the interior ministry and the police in general. The Social Democrats, furthermore, are currently in particularly good terms with *Krone* (which is considered a political asset to win elections in Austria). Another striking contrast is the complete absence of the xenophobia frame in *Krone*, which is certainly a consequence that they are usually highly critical towards foreign nationals and clearly do not expand their campaign for the Zogaj family to all immigrants (which seems to be *Standard's* intend).

Lastly, critical frames towards immigrants and particularly the Zogaj family are much more prominent in *Krone*, which seems more obliged to reiterate Arigona's older brothers' criminal record and the notion of illegal immigration. Although the original cause was to support the Zogajs, given *Krone's* readers' negative reaction and its overall position in immigration matters, it has more incentives not to conceal but instead highlight these established facts (to a much higher degree than *Standard*).

Narrative Analysis

HOW TO BECOME A SYMBOL OF A DISPUTED IMMIGRATION POLICY

The Zogaj affair begins for news media, as with Elián González, with a series of dramatic events: The deportation of the greater part of the Zogaj family; Arigona Zogaj evading deportation and going underground; Arigona's mother being allowed to stay to look for Arigona; threats by Arigona to kill herself in case she cannot stay and the rest of her family is not allowed back, addressed to the interior ministry in a video message broadcasted on Austrian television; protests by the local community against the extradition of their neighbors; Arigona's return from hiding and appearance in front of the public; and finally her return to school which turned into an international media event. All this happens in a time frame of 22 days (September 26th to October 17th, 2007), in which 46 articles appear in *Standard* and 25 in *Krone*.

Arigona immediately becomes a symbol in the ongoing political debate about immigration in Austria; a symbol utilized on both sides of the political spectrum. Ensuing discussions are thus not limited to *her* particular challenges of having become Austrian over the last five years while facing deportation from the place she considers home. First of all, it sets the

agenda to discuss similar predicaments of hardship cases as legacy debts of an asylum policy which leaves many asylum seekers in a liminal state of waiting for years until their application is decided upon. Secondly, it inspires debate on asylum laws exploited by so-called bogus asylum seekers and economic refugees. Moreover, the question how Austria should define itself—as an immigration country or as a nation which needs to secure its borders from an overflow of immigrants—becomes a central issue.

This means that, from the beginning, not only Arigona Zogaj but immigrants as a whole (or at least subsets, i.e. asylum seekers, hardship cases) are main characters in the various narrative constructions. These immigrants face rigid and strict laws, an inefficient bureaucracy, and on top of it inhuman public officials. The latter is represented foremost by interior minister Günter Platter, viewed as a merciless hardliner who intends to create a precedent for a strict immigration policy at the expense of the Zogajs. From his (and his successor's) perspective, mercy for the Zogajs would mean letting media pressure win over the law and creating an example other immigrants could follow.

From the start and as a consequence of the intense coverage of the case, the media themselves become main protagonists in the affair, mostly in terms of polluting each other as exploiting the case for political purposes and thereby making a normal life impossible for the Zogajs. *Austrian Broadcasting Corporation* (ORF), for instance, is accused of interfering in the case by extorting the suicide threat video and *Krone's* siding with the Zogaj cause is discussed as an unprecedented political opportunity to change course in immigration policy.

Another important constituent is the local community of Frankenburg whose vigils and protest against the deportation of their neighbors serve as testimony of the “well-integratedness” of the Zogajs from the beginning of the drama. This is particularly significant given that such civil protests are uncommon not to say unique, especially in rural areas and particularly for *foreign* nationals, at least until this point. Even though these protests were ultimately unsuccessful, they served as a template for other, partly successful protests (i.e. deportation of these other people was successfully averted). Local politicians utilize this community support, not only obvious exponents of the liberal Green Party but even conservative politicians (e.g. the Governor of Upper Austria).

Arigona's suicide threat was of particular importance in initiating the drama since it provides the “activation energy” sparking public interest about the issue and the necessary collective effervescence to generate political capital from it. From her hiding spot, Arigona states: „I don't want to blackmail anybody but I was serious about suicide: I'd rather kill myself than going back [to Kosovo], because down there I don't have a future.“ (*Der Standard* 06 October 2007, p. 13)²⁰ This message is not only effective as a performance of perseverance – a 15-year old girl who is ready to go to the very extreme in order to prevent that her family's life is forcibly taken from them; it is also a performance of “successful integration” as Arigona speaks a distinctive Austrian-German dialect and expresses quite clearly that she does not consider Kosovo as home.

However, the video was not only important for the immediate protagonist, Arigona Zogaj. Even more importantly, it served as a script for other actors who made arguments for immigration reform to avoid circumstances, which lead people to such acts of desperation.

²⁰ German original: “Ich will jetzt niemanden erpressen. Das mit dem Selbstmord habe ich ernst gemeint. Wenn ich zurückmuss, dann bring ich mich lieber um, weil unten habe ich keine Zukunft.”

These arguments, however, did not resonate likewise in all media spaces. Despite *Krone's* Zogaj-endorsing position, which is widely received with surprise, especially by its opponents in the liberal press, a close reading reveals that the claims being made based on this common stance are quite different from each other. This becomes evident in a column by the now deceased (and then considered as one of the most powerful people in Austrian politics) editor in chief, Hans Dichand:

Nothing should happen to the girl. The same goes for a part of her family that is considered fully integrated and should thus be allowed to stay in Austria together with Arigona. (*Kronen Zeitung* 12 October 2007, p. 3)²¹

In *Krone*, the unfolding of the initial series of events consolidates to a narrative of the *good immigrant*. In this story, the romantic heroes are immigrants who speak our language perfectly, who are “fully integrated” and successful at what they do. Stories mention, for instance, that Arigona is good at school, that she is a good runner,²² and that the family enjoys the support of their community (certifying the Zogajs as “good neighbors”).²³

This image of the good immigrant is contrasted with *Krone's* more typical claims about foreigners, who are deviant (only foreigners who did not get in conflict with the law should be amnestied) and who are “economic refugees”, in other words “abusers of asylum” because: “To be fair, the actual idea of asylum is often not ostensible, instead the motivation is immigration. Asylum is only an excuse!”²⁴ Although it codes the Zogaj family on the positive side of the narrative of “good immigrants”, *Krone* accepts counterevidence by sources more readily than *Standard* (which also reflects in the prominence of the outlaw-frame) and does not seem to get tired of emphasizing the “usual situation”:

Despite the negative asylum ruling he [the father] exposed his wife and five children a year later to coyotes”, so the critique of head of the legal department of the interior ministry, Mathias Vogl. More than 8000 Euros went to these ruthless slave traders. (*Kronen Zeitung* 08 October 2007, p. 8)²⁵

Krone criticizes other media, particularly *Standard*, and the Green Party for concealing this fact²⁶ and does mention repeatedly that the Zogaj family migrated “illegally” into the country after the interior ministry leaked information to the press about Arigona’s brothers’ criminal file and the about how they entered the country. We also find another story building up in the initiation of the Zogaj drama in *Krone*. It is defined by a polluting discourse against the administration which ordered a “deportation commando” to execute the extradition and whose actions are denoted as inhumane.²⁷ Unlike *Standard*, however, it does not name specific political actors (neither officials nor parties) in this context. The tragic heroes of this

²¹ German original: “Dem Mädchen sollte nichts passieren. Auch einem Teil ihrer Familie, die ja als voll integriert angesehen wird, müsste erlaubt werden, mit Arigona zusammen in Österreich zu leben.”

²² See, for instance, *Kronen Zeitung*, 03 October, 2007, p. 10.

²³ *Kronen Zeitung*, 06 October 2007, p. ? (not indicated in the archive, the title of the article is “Würfelspiel in Frankenburg”), see also: *Kronen Zeitung*, 30 September 2007, p. 18, 06 October, 2007, p. 12-13.

²⁴ *Kronen Zeitung*, 14 October 2007, p. 32. (German original: “Man sollte auch die Fairness haben, sich einzugestehen, dass der Asylgedanke in den meisten Fällen gar nicht im Vordergrund steht, sondern jener der Zuwanderung. Der Asylantrag dient hierfür nur als Vorwand!”)

²⁵ German original: “Trotz negativen Asylbescheids setzte er seine Frau und die fünf Kinder aber ein Jahr später Schleppern aus”, so die Kritik von Rechtssektionsleiter Mathias Vogl. An die skrupellosen Menschenhändler flossen mehr als 8000 Euro.

²⁶ *Kronen Zeitung*, 20 October 2007, p. 2.

²⁷ *Kronen Zeitung*, 30 September 2007, p. 18.

story are Arigona and her mother as perceptible victims of this inhumane treatment. It is important to note here that this narrative is strikingly limited as the circle of victims is not expanded, i.e. to hardship cases, asylum seekers, etc. The narrative construction consequently stays on the idiosyncratic level of the Zogaj case, which is where it potentially produces agitation against a vague referent (the authorities) but nothing beyond that. If it criticizes the interior minister it does so in a complaisant manner. According to *Krone*, he did not provoke but rather happened to find himself in this difficult situation:

It is thus not surprising that interior minister Platter had a hard time to defend the procedures of his authorities in the interview [in the evening news of ORF]. It almost seemed as if he was close to tears ... Especially Platter is the opposite of a heartless and cynical power-hungry politician. ... The times when it was easy to distinguish between good and evil are over – moods swing quickly. Political talent proves the one who masters such situations. (*Kronen Zeitung*, 04 October 2007, p. 10)²⁸

Der Standard, in contrast to *Krone*'s story of the good immigrant, tells a story of good immigrants (plural). Positive attributes attached to the Zogajs extend to the larger group of immigrants and are not contrasted to negative attributes of "bad" immigrants.

A family was extradited, not to say deported. They had a good name. The Zogajs were not only integrated but popular in Frankenburg. It's not about an application for asylum anymore but about humanity and justice for children that grew up here. (*Der Standard*, 10 October, 2007, p. 39)²⁹

The heroes of this story are framed as cultural, economic as well as demographic enrichment for Austrian society. Austria should, in turn, finally avow itself to be an immigration country. Referring to a EU legislative proposal for immigration policy, an early commentary expresses this sentiment:

Immigration is – under certain circumstances – desirable in prospering but aging societies. Who enters [a certain country] has all legal rights and support to integrate fully. An interesting approach for Austria, provided its politicians finally admit they are living in an immigration country. (*Der Standard*, 02 October 2007, p. 32)³⁰

Besides such more pragmatic consideration, this narrative is also supported by broader human rights concerns, such as the right for family life³¹, or general legalizations of illegal immigrants in southern Europe.³² The villains of this narrative proliferate as the story

²⁸ German original: "Da verwundert es wenig, wenn Innenminister Platter sich beim ZiB2-Interview sehr schwer tat, die Vorgangsweise seiner Behörden zu verteidigen. Es sah fast aus, als wäre Platter den Tränen nahe ... Gerade Günther Platter ist das Gegenteil des herzlosen oder zynischen Machtmenschen ... Die Zeiten, in denen es einfach war, zwischen Gut und Böse zu unterscheiden werden (sic), sind vorbei - Stimmungen können sehr rasch umschlagen. Politisches Talent beweist, wer solche Situationen meistert."

²⁹ German original: "Eine Familie wurde abgeschoben. Um nicht zu sagen, deportiert. Sie hatten einen guten Namen. Die Zogajs waren nicht bloß integriert, sondern in ganz Frankenburg beliebt. Längst geht es nicht mehr um den Asylantrag, sondern um Menschlichkeit und Gerechtigkeit gegenüber Kindern, die hier aufgewachsen sind."

³⁰ German original: "Zuwanderung ist - unter bestimmten Bedingungen - in einer prosperierenden, aber demografisch schrumpfenden Gesellschaft durchaus erwünscht. Wer kommt, hat dann aber auch alle Rechte und jede Unterstützung, um sich voll zu integrieren. Ein interessanter Ansatz, auch für Österreich: vorausgesetzt, seine Politiker geben endlich zu, dass es ein Einwanderungsland ist."). Similar claims see *Der Standard*, 03 October, 2007, p. 38, *Der Standard*, 09 October, 2007, p. 32, *Der Standard*, 10 October, 2007, p. 39.

³¹ See: *Der Standard*, 03 October, 2007, p. 9, *Der Standard*, 10 October, 2007, p. 39

³² See: *Der Standard*, 09 October, 2007, p. 32.

continues, but they are especially (in the order of appearance and significance) interior minister Günter Platter (his position is taken factually and narratively by Maria Fekter in the summer of 2008) and the ruling coalition of People's Party and Social Democrats. These actors are labeled as inhumane and stubborn, as spineless party soldiers and reactionary hardliners. In an interview the president of the Viennese Jewish Community, Ariel Muzicant, says:

When interior minister Platter emphasizes he is only abiding by the law this invokes terrible associations. I'm not comparing the minister with this person but Adolf Eichmann also defended himself by saying that he only complied with the laws of his time and plead innocent in his trial. What I am trying to say: This policy of deportation is absolutely immoral. (*Der Standard*, 06 November 2007, p. 6)³³

An Op-Ed contributor commented: "I don't give a damn about these laws if they serve as an excuse of atrocities."³⁴ Arguments like these, of disregarding the law, are absent in *Krone*. Instead we find positive affirmations of selective acts of goodwill, conditioned on clean criminal records. Consequently, these narratives relate to the different political claims discussed in the framing analysis: *Standard* pushing legal security for "long-term integrated" – the thousands of people who have been waiting for their asylum decision and thereby became Austrian. It specifically rejects arbitrary acts of mercy as insufficient solution, which is exactly what *Krone* calls for: Lenience in hardship cases who became victim of an inefficient administration and were "accidentally" integrated, so to speak. Publisher Hans Dichand pushes this claim against the perceived opinion of his readers, who continue the familiar tone in *Krone's* immigration discourse against the Zogaj family:

We are sorry about that [many of you disagree with our position], because we think that politicians made themselves guilty through failures, which we think can be partly redressed by mercy instead of legislation. We consider this our moral duty and obligation as Christians. (*Kronen Zeitung* 12 October 2007, p. 3)³⁵

The request is to improve and, most importantly, reduce the duration of asylum proceedings.³⁶ At the same time it advocates for "humane solutions" for "good" immigrants to compensate for bureaucratic inflexibility.³⁷ While this position is remarkable in its own terms, considering the track record, *Krone* even carefully hints at more thorough solutions: "Even a discussion about a possible amnesty in pending proceedings should not be taboo."³⁸

³³ German original "Wenn Innenminister Günther Platter immer wieder betont, dass er mit seiner Vorgangsweise nur die geltenden Gesetze erfüllt, dann drängen sich bei mir ganz furchtbare Assoziationen auf. Freilich ohne den Minister mit dieser Person vergleichen zu wollen: Aber Adolf Eichmann hat sich einst bei seinem Prozess auch mit den Worten verteidigt, dass er immer nur die herrschenden Gesetze erfüllt habe, und sich für völlig unschuldig erklärt. Was ich damit sagen will: Ich halte seine Abschiebungspolitik für absolut unmoralisch."

³⁴ *Der Standard*, 08 October, 2007, p. 23 (German original: "Ich pfeif auf diese Gesetze, wenn sie als Ausreden für Untaten herhalten."), other examples in: *Der Standard*, 12 October, 2007, p. 35, *Der Standard*, 15 October, 2007, p. 1, *Der Standard*, 15 December, 2007, p. 40.

³⁵ German original: "Das tut uns leid, weil wir meinen, dass durch arge Versäumnisse auf Seiten der Politik Schuld entstanden ist, die wir durch Nachsicht anstelle von Recht zum Teil gutmachen können. Wir halten dies für unsere moralische und auch christliche Pflicht."

³⁶ See *Kronen Zeitung*, 14 October, 2007, p. 32, 04 November, 2007, p. 38.

³⁷ See *Kronen Zeitung*, 06 October, 2007, p. 2, 10 October, 2007, p. 2.

³⁸ German original: "Auch eine Diskussion über eine allfällige Amnestie bei derzeit anhängigen Verfahren sollte kein Tabuthema sein." (*Kronen Zeitung*, 14 October, 2007, p. 32)

Parallel to more heroic constructions of resistance against state authorities, in *Standard* we also find from the beginning a tragic narrative of inhumane conduct, building on the collective memory of previous cases of police brutality against foreigners and using the example of the Zogaj case to reinvigorate associated collective sentiments.³⁹ It is primarily a polluting discourse against political action and politicians themselves. The tragic heroes suffering under inhumane political conduct in Austria are not only immigrants but the public *Standard* addresses, who emphasize and reject living in a society which tolerates such practices.

Given the growing sense of sympathy for the evident despair of daughter and mother Zogaj and the outrage over the many planned deportations of long-term integrated foreigners, the train has seems to have left for Platter: Just being a hardliner cannot be enough! (*Der Standard* 01 October 2007, p. 24)⁴⁰

‘Is this the social policy of which you keep talking about?’, asks the Green [party leader Van der Bellen] and talks about asylum seekers who are being pulled out of their jobs: “This policy is not humane but inhumane, not social but unsocial.” (*Der Standard* 11 October 2007, p. 3)⁴¹

Some politicians identify with this position as narrators of the tragedy. Some of them, however, are not successful in making authentic claims, for instance Social Democratic Prime Minister Gusenbauer who is more ridiculed than praised for calling the extradition “horrible”. Instead he is associated with other members of the government and their parties on the polluted side of the narrative. Another actor on the polluted side of this narrative is *Krone*. *Standard* emphasizes the political significance of *Krone*’s exceptional position in the Zogaj case, presupposing its role as a full-blown political player in Austria. It argues, for instance, that “*Krone*’s first campaign for foreigners” is a unprecedented political opportunity⁴² and that the People’s Party will not be able to sustain its hardened position without *Krone*’s support.⁴³ As I turns out, however, this was wrong.

THE QUIET DISAPPEARANCE OF THE SHINING HERO

In the late spring and summer of 2008 there are some important but gradual changes in the discursive structure of the case, which become more consequential in the last phase of the drama. Four, partly interacting conditions are important to understand the consequences:

1) Arigona’s mother survives a suicide attempt in May after her husband abandoned the family in Kosovo. Her and Arigona’s mental states are assessed as unstable and at risk by mental health experts, who therefore advise against their deportation. Discursively, well-integratedness is not used as often to call for right of residence half a year after the affair started. The assertion that “our people” are facing deportation underwent argumentative

³⁹ For instance the case of Marcus Omofuma, an asylum seeker from Nigeria who was negligently killed during an aircraft deportation by three Austrian policemen.

⁴⁰ German original: “Angesichts des zunehmenden Mitgefühls mit der augenscheinlichen Verzweiflung von Tochter und Mutter Zogaj und der Empörung über die österreichweit vielen weiteren Fälle geplanter Abschiebung von langzeitintegrierten Ausländern scheint Platter den Zug der Zeit versäumt zu haben: Nur Hardliner sein allein kann einfach nicht ausreichend sein!”

⁴¹ German original: “Ist das die Sozialpolitik, von der Sie reden?”, will der Grüne wissen unterzählt von Asylwerbern, die aus ihren Jobs gerissen würden: ‘Diese Politik ist nicht menschlich, sondern unmenschlich, nicht sozial, sondern asozial.’”

⁴² *Der Standard*, 05 October, 2007, p. 35.

⁴³ *Der Standard*, 09 October, 2007, p. 32.

inflation which required to substitute it or add other elements to it. The mother's suicide attempt and the review of mental health experts provided a discursive opportunity, a change of the underlying cultural structure which raises the prominence of claims based on a need for protection (Ferree et al. 2002:62). As opposed to the former, which is based on achievement (successful integration), this new frame invokes victimhood. Not only liberal advocates use this opportunity but also for the interior minister to leave the deadlocked position of mercilessness and defer deportation. As a consequence, the scope of claims for the Zogajs to be allowed to stay narrowed to the particular case. In an interview with *Der Standard*, the chief of the Green Party argues:

I think that interior minister Platter should grant humanitarian right of residence for Arigona Zogaj, her mother and the two other underage children who are in Kosovo. This is the only way to help the mother to overcome her crisis, in which authorities led her in the first place. (*Der Standard* 20 June 2008, p. 16)⁴⁴

The interior minister continues to be polluted in regard to his initial adamant position and now also to his deferral of an ultimate decision after the release of the mental health report. An editorial argues:

Only now, as the family is deprived of its livelihood, Nuriye Zogaj [the mother] a physical and emotional train wreck, and the family is disrupted, compassion emerges slowly ... The soul must be sore to erect the minister's mercy. (*Der Standard* 20 June 2008, p. 40)⁴⁵

2) Initial polls ("actual" public opinion) suggested that a majority wanted the families like the Zogajs not to be extradited and granted right of residence.⁴⁶ Half a year later, there is a *perceived* shift of public opinion against the Zogajs, even in their home and previous stronghold, the town of Frankenburg. Hence, this form of published opinion is not based on any form of surveying but rather on assessments of journalists and other actors in the public sphere who observe an oversaturation of public attention and sympathies:

As much as Arigona was admired in the broad public half a year ago, the more she is rejected and insulted now: People are sick of her story, she and her mother should already leave Austria, they say. Here we have ... an example where media hype shifts and – according to the laws of mass psychology – turns against the formerly praised. (*Der Standard* 25 May 2008, p. 24)⁴⁷

This effect seems close to what Snow et. al (Snow et al. 1986:477) referred to as an "oversaturated market", the effect of cooperating social movements falling out of favor with constituents when they bombard them with similar appeal. Even if this claim seems insignificant initially, the fact that it endures (most prevalent in the final phase) made it true

⁴⁴ German original: "Ich finde, dass Minister Platter Arigona Zogaj, ihrer Mutter und den zwei minderjährigen Kindern im Kosovo eine humanitäre Aufenthaltsbewilligung erteilen soll. Nur so kann die Mutter aus der Krise herausgeholt werden, in die sie ja auch durch Behördenentscheid geraten ist."

⁴⁵ German original: "Erst jetzt, wo man der Familie die Lebensgrundlage entzogen hat, Nuriye Zogaj körperlich und seelisch ein Wrack und die Familie zerrissen ist, keimt vorsichtig Milde auf. ... Die Seele muss wund sein, um Hoffnung auf des Ministers Gnade zu haben."

⁴⁶ *Kronen Zeitung*, 10 October 2007, p. 2.

⁴⁷ German original: "So sehr Arigona Zogaj vor einem halben Jahr in der breiten Öffentlichkeit bewundert und bemitleidet worden ist, so sehr wird sie jetzt abgelehnt und beschimpft: Man könne ihre Geschichte schon nicht mehr hören, sie und ihre Mutter sollten Österreich verlassen, heißt es. Hier ist ... ein Medienhype umgeschwenkt und hat sich - den Gesetzen der Massenpsychologie folgend - gegen die einst Hochgelobten gewendet."

in its discursive consequences. What is more, this claim initiates a feedback loop between a perceived shift of public opinion, political response to this perceived shift, and an actual change of public opinion. What I want to argue, in other words: This perceived shift of opinion had real consequences in terms of a) opening political opportunities to reposition and act accordingly and b) how these are in turn interpreted and evaluated by the public.

3) In the summer of 2008 interior minister Platter is replaced by Maria Fekter. Her initial comments about the Zogajs are even more abrasive than those of her predecessor. Together with the imagined shift of opinion, this mitigates the discursive inviolability of the Zogaj family, in other words: Pollution of the Zogaj family is legitimized. Fekter, for instance, reminds Arigona's mentally ill mother in an interview that her underage children in Kosovo would also need her parental affection⁴⁸ and (this will become her most infamous statement) that "I have to abide by the law, no matter if doe eyes look at me from the TV or not."⁴⁹ One month after Fekter was sworn in, polls suggested that the majority was against a right of residence for the Zogajs.⁵⁰

4) In the second half of 2008, the interior ministry has to defend itself in a parliamentary caucus against accusations of abuse of authority. One charge involves the leak of information about prior convictions of Arigona's brothers to *Kronen Zeitung*, preceding their denial of humanitarian right of residence in November of 2007. *Krone*, as the benefactor of this leak, remains silent about this issue by and large, whereas in *Standard* it was an important topic and therefore the accusation of abuse of authority was repeatedly raised.

The consequence of these four aspects is that narratives involving Arigona as romantic heroine disappear, she becomes a powerless victim like all other foreign nationals in Austria. In the light of these developments and in contrast to the initial image of heroic resistance and integrative achievement, subsequent narrative constructions view her as subdued by a merciless state, in other words: as tragic hero. This shift only takes full fruit in the final phase when it becomes apparent that all legal measures have been exhausted, that there was no mercy to be expected from the interior ministry, and that the family would have to leave.

DEPORTATION / "VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE"

The last phase of the drama progresses in three stages: After a phase of little coverage the story returns to public conscience when the constitutional court denies another application for asylum in November 2009. Seven months later, in mid June 2010 the appeal to this decision is rejected and thereby all legal remedies exhausted. The extradition becomes imminent and follows one month later, on July 15th, 2010. The date and the place of departure is successfully kept secret before the family leaves.

As the frame analysis suggested, one of the most significant differences between *Standard* and *Krone* is the issue of xenophobia, which is nonexistent in the latter's news coverage. In *Standard* the initial romantic narrative first turns into mere polluting discourse and is now largely replaced by a tragic narrative of xenophobia. Here, immigrants and also the liberal public (the "implied readers" of these stories (Iser 1978)) are tragic heroes, who are tyrannized and are not granted human rights they strive for personally or, in the latter case, for the society they live in. The villains of this narratives are the political mainstream, *Kronen*

⁴⁸ *Der Standard*, 27 June 2008, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Der Standard*, 14 January 2009, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Die Presse*, 28 July 2008, p. 4.

Zeitung, the rule of law, and even Austrian society as a whole. In this context we also see some feedback between journalists and online discussions, which might be one of their indicators for the perceived public opinion mentioned above:

We live in an intolerant society, this shows in many respects ... [for instance] the law relating to aliens. How Arigona Zogaj is being dealt with and the hatred she is facing, even in discussion forums of this newspaper. (*Der Standard*, 13 November 2009, p. 36)⁵¹

The posting-culture on webpages of newspapers, magazines, and the ORF is important. ... But it is also an outlet for the common badness. Sometimes it is so terrible that even *Krone* has to close its online forums, for example those about Arigona Zogaj. (*Der Standard*, 12 January 2010, p. 1)⁵²

The villain of the xenophobia narrative either actively push or passively tolerate xenophobia instead of challenging it. This kind of critique is often directed towards the Social Democrats, who “should know better” ideologically but who helped pass stricter immigration laws in parliament and who never go out of their way advocating for improving immigrant rights. The backdrop of Austria’s Nazi past and present residues thereof is omnipresent and Jörg Haider’s successful anti-immigrant populism is also brought up occasionally in this context.⁵³ Although xenophobia appears from the beginning, only after the second-last constitutional court decision it becomes a dominating argument in *Standard* coverage.

Obviously referring to *Krone*—the only news organization in Austria that claims such a political weight—a columnist argues:

Humanitarian right of residence has long ago lost against fear mongering of some news media against foreigners. Politics acts as an executioner of these self-proclaimed public representatives. (*Der Standard*, 22 March 2010, p. 21)⁵⁴

The immigrants’ (and the Zogaj family’s) role in this story is that of helpless victims on whose backs xenophobic sentiments strike down; as much as they are symbols to claim more civilized immigration policies, they are also representations of excessive charitableness towards foreigners for right-wing political groups. The notion of mental weakness, the intensification of anti-Zogaj discourse, and the imagined shift of opinion against the Zogaj family lay the groundwork for these actors to push immigrants’ predicaments away and focus instead on the idea of misuse of asylum they accuse them of.

Most Austrians have long ago stopped finding them likeable. And they find them even less worth supporting: Arigona Zogajs and her family ... are largely perceived as dubious and uninvited characters by now; as foreigners who sought affluence but said “asylum”; as people who infiltrated our welfare state – and that have to be forced to leave by all legal

⁵¹ German original: “Wir haben es mit einer intoleranten Gesellschaft zu tun, das sieht man an vielen Beispielen ... [z.B.] das Fremdenrecht. Der Umgang mit einem Mädchen wie Arigona Zogaj und der Hass, der ihr entgegenschlägt, auch in den Postingforen dieser Zeitung.”

⁵² German original: “Die Posting-Kultur auf den Internet-Seiten von Zeitungen, Magazinen und ORF ist an sich wichtig ... Aber sie ist auch ein Ventil für die landläufige Schlechtigkeit. Manchmal wird es so arg, dass sogar die Krone ihr Posting-Forum etwa zum Thema Arigona Zogaj schließen muss.”

⁵³ *Der Standard* 12 November, 2009, p. 2.

⁵⁴ German original: “[D]as ‘humanitäre Bleiberecht’ hat längst verloren gegen die von einzelnen Massenmedien geschürte Angst vor Fremden. Die Politik fungiert als Exekutor dieser selbsternannten Volksvertreter.”

means. (*Der Standard*, 12 November 2009, p. 36)⁵⁵

The tragic significance of this commentary is intensified by the fact that it is written by the reporter who covered most stories about the Zogajs for *Der Standard*, Irene Brickner, consequently a key figure in this debate within the liberal public sphere. Moreover, the market leader *Krone* picks up on it and interprets it as an acknowledgment of defeat:

When the turmoil around the negative asylum ruling in the Arigona Zogaj case even prompts “Der Standard” to write about the mood in the population turning against the Kosovan family, about the Zogajs “largely perceived as dubious and uninvited characters” because they are foreigners who infiltrated our welfare state—that says it all. “Der Standard” is usually known for undisputedly siding with asylum seekers and their lawyers and against whoever the interior minister is. (*Kronen Zeitung*, 14 November 2009, p. 2)⁵⁶

Another striking contrast to *Standard* is the ambivalence of *Krone* which is never as explicit as in the wake of the Zogaj family’s extradition. It appears to be based on a tightrope walk of not forming unintended discursive alliances, maintaining the predefined editorial position to some degree, and satisfying a wide audience who is divided on the issue and who is served by columnists with equally divergent opinions. Within this ambivalence, however, there appear two competing narratives: *Krone* was first to report about the extradition decision in November 2009, before even the Zogaj family was informed about it. This decision was framed with an unprecedented law-is-law discourse and by polluting *illegal* immigrants whom the Zogajs belonged to in the first place. Such economic refugees have to be hindered of abusing the right of asylum, which thus needs to be reformed as a way to faster extradite if justified.⁵⁷

The Zogajs have at no point in time fulfilled the conditions for asylum seekers ... Instead these bogus asylum seekers thumb their noses at the Austrian state. It is obvious that our law of foreigners is outrageously porous to such an extend that only now this business could be put an end to. (*Kronen Zeitung*, 20 November 2009, p. 4)⁵⁸

In this phase it seems that advocacy for the Zogajs as symbols of “immigrants we want” stands in the way of political claim-making and pollution of the liberal left (i.e. “the axis green-salmon pink” and “do-gooders”). This narrative thus centers on law abiding, mostly implicitly (but later also explicitly) purifying the majority who abides by the law and polluting immigrants who violate or utilize it to enrich themselves and their Austrian accomplices

⁵⁵ German original: “Sympathisch sind sie den meisten Österreichern schon lange nicht mehr. Und unterstützenswert kommen sie ihnen erst recht nicht vor: Arigona Zogaj und ihre Restfamilie ... werden inzwischen überwiegend als zwielichtige und ungebetene Gestalten gesehen. Als Ausländer, die den Wohlstand gesucht, aber “Asyl” gesagt haben. Die sich in den Wohlfahrtsstaat Österreich eingeschlichen haben - und jetzt mit allen rechtlichen Mitteln zur Ausreise gezwungen werden müssen.”

⁵⁶ German original: “Wenn jetzt sogar schon “Der Standard” zum Wirbel um den negativen Asylbescheid im Fall Arigona Zogaj schreibt, dass die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung längst gegen diese kosovarische Familie gekippt ist, dass die Zogajs “überwiegend als zwielichtige und ungebetene Gestalten” angesehen werden, weil es sich um Ausländer handelt, die sich in den Wohlfahrtsstaat Österreich eingeschlichen haben, dann sagt das wohl alles. “Der Standard” steht ja ansonsten eher dafür, ohne Wenn und Aber immer auf der Seite von Asylanten samt ihren Anwälten und gegen den jeweiligen Innenminister zu stehen.”

⁵⁷ See also: *Kronen Zeitung*, 13 November 2009, p. 3, 14 November 2009, p. 2, 15 November 2009, p. 13.

⁵⁸ German original: “Die Zogajs [haben] zu keinem Zeitpunkt ihres illegalen Aufenthalts die Voraussetzungen als Asylwerber erfüllt Sie haben vielmehr als Scheinasylanten dem Staat Österreich eine lange Nase gedreht, und unsere Fremden Gesetze sind offensichtlich derart skandalös durchlässig, dass diesem Treiben erst nach Jahren ein Schlusspunkt gesetzt worden ist.”

from the liberal left for helping them doing so. It sustains this discourse, even until shortly before the extradition when *Krone* again intensively claims mercy for the Zogajs. It does so, however, without aligning with abovementioned accomplices who again organize demonstrations and a petition against the deportation. *Krone* denounces their posture as intellectually arrogant and their motives as fostering societal disruption between sweeping advocates of illegal immigrants and the law-abiding and law-devout majority. The opposite narrative that claims mercy is coupled with a polluting discourse of the political class as a whole not to have made an exception and which is framed as cowardly:

The behavior of the political elite in the Zogaj case, starting with the president and downwards, is of pathetic cowardice. Out of fear to lose in approval ratings, they hide legal judgment. This is not politics, this is a disgrace. (*Kronen Zeitung*, 16 June 2010, p.2)⁵⁹

In the same issue of the paper an article titles “Integrated families should be permitted to stay in Austria”⁶⁰—a remarkable headline considering the track record. The ambivalence becomes most clear, considering an article on the day the Zogajs left to Kosovo, which denounces the narrative of law-abidance that *Krone* itself pushes:

There are people who are really happy now. Law must remain law! The state showed the ropes to the Zogajs! So, is it any better when they are finally gone? Has live become more beautiful? (*Kronen Zeitung*, 15 July 2010, p. 14)⁶¹

Ultimately, this ambiguous stance resonates with how the story ended: The Zogajs were forced to leave and encouraged to apply for a visa and enter Austria legally by state authorities. In November 2010 the Zogajs have fulfilled all conditions and filed all papers to legally re-enter Austria on November 24th, almost three years after the conflict started.

⁵⁹ German original: “Das Verhalten der Spitzenpolitik im Fall Zogaj vom Bundespräsidenten abwärts ist von erbärmlicher Feigheit. Aus Angst, in der Umfragegunst zu sinken, verschanzt man sich hinter einem Richterspruch. Das ist keine Politik, das ist eine Schande.”

⁶⁰ *Kronen Zeitung*, 03 July 2010, p. 2. German original: “Integrierte Familien sollen in Österreich bleiben dürfen.”

⁶¹ German original: “Es gibt schon Leute, die sich jetzt richtig riesig freuen. Recht muss Recht bleiben! Denen Zogajs hat's der Staat aber gezeigt. Und, geht's besser, wenn die endlich weg sind? Ist das Leben schöner geworden?”

Elián González: Half-Orphan Refugee Hero (USA)

Frame Analysis

As in the Zogaj case, I identified frames in a first inductive reading of the data, which amounted to 714 articles, 549 of which mainly dealt with the affair and were used for the analysis. I distinguish 18 frames in the Elián González case, which are again subdivided in three categories and one stand-alone frame: 1) They deal with the Castro regime and the escape thereof (*refugee frames*), 2) Issues around custody rights and violations and rights of the child (*custody frames*), 3) Political and legal actions (*official frames*), and 4) meta-media debate (*metacommentary*).

Refugee frames: 1) *Anti-communism*: Critical discourse against the Castro regime, dictatorship, and communism more broadly but more importantly: dismissive statements against persons based on their association with this regime (e.g. denying Elián's father genuine parental motives but instead calling him a mere instrument of the regime). 2) *Freedom*: Issues strongly associated with anti-communism, which is celebrating the escape from Cuba, the American way of life, democracy, and liberty. 3) *Mysticism*: Arguments and indications which frame Elián's flight from Cuba as a sacred mission. Indications are, for instance, a recurring story that Elián was saved by Dolphins and religious epiphanies. 4) *Resistance*: Statements that discuss the Cuban-American resistance against state authorities and the Cuban regime from taking Elián back to Cuba. 5) *Defiance*: Arguments that frame Cuban-American resistance negatively, as defiant and aimed at causing troubles and make waves. 6) *Kidnapping*: Statements denouncing Cuban-Americans (and the Miami family in particular) as kidnappers of Elián and as otherwise criminal. 7) *Emotional*: Statements that belittle Cuban-Americans (and their cause) for being overly emotional.

Custody frames: 1) *Best interest*: Arguments based on an understanding of Elián's best interests, indirectly (insinuating) or directly (e.g. Elián's cousin who has actually immediate access to Elián). 2) *Exploitation*: Statements which interpret the intention to keep Elián in the US and the measures to do so politically or strategically motivated and thus exploitative (Cuban-American defiance against state authorities is strongly connected to this), including actions and proclamations of politicians who are siding with them. 3) *Parental fitness*: Denying or granting either Elián's father or Elián's Miami family their aptness to parent Elián and their ability of responsible guardianship. 4) *Reunification*: Arguments that are based on the idea of reunifying father and son and the "sacred bond of the family."

Official frames: 1) *Legal provisions*: Statements that refer to legal decisions and the law in general and which are mostly expressed in a pacifying manner. Also include sanitizing arguments, such as framing the raid as a clinical procedure (the duration of the raid, three minutes, is often mentioned). 2) *Segregationist*: Statements that impute segregationist motives to Miami politicians and that compare them to politicians of southern states in the civil rights era. 3) *No choice*: Statements mostly responding to the next frame and that suggests there was no other choice other than raiding the house and taking the Elián by force (mostly expressed by the Clinton administration). 4) *Excessive use of force*: Calling the raid of the house of Elián's Miami family an excessive use of force and statements comparing agents with "Stormtroopers" (Rudy Giuliani). In this context Reno's past is mentioned, especially the Waco siege for which she was held responsible. 5) *Passiveness*: Framing cautiousness of state authorities to intervene and stop the resistance and blockade of the house as negative (often

again in the context of Reno's history). 6) *Conciliatoriness*: Arguments which frame actions of the government as motivated by improving diplomatic relations to Cuba or even as subordinating to Castro.

Metacommentary: Same as above (discussion of media and public debate of the case itself).

Table 6 Gonzalez - Overall Frame Prominence

		Times	Post
Refugee Frames	Anti-Communist	27.7%	26.5%
	Freedom	17.8%	19.0%
	Mysticism	4.5%	5.7%
	Resistance	10.9%	5.1%
	Defiance	23.4%	18.8%
	Kidnapping	12.0%	18.5%
	Emotional	8.8%	3.9%
Custody Frames	Best Interest	15.7%	17.3%
	Exploitation	31.4%	25.9%
	Parental Fitness	9.3%	9.8%
	Reunification	22.6%	27.1%
Official Frames	Legal Provisions	18.6%	8.0%
	Segregationist	1.9%	0.6%
	No Choice	10.4%	7.4%
	Excessive Use of Force	15.2%	13.7%
	Passiveness	2.9%	2.4%
	Conciliatoriness	5.3%	4.8%
	Metacommentary	11.2%	16.7%

Compared to the Austrian case, we can see in Table 6 that difference of frame prominence is less dramatic. Some of the differences are even misleading or contradictory regarding the papers' different emphases in covering the story and their editorial stances, keeping in mind that frame prominence does not reveal anything about how they are connoted. Nonetheless, this speaks to an actual division of news and opinion, which is far stronger in US journalism, not only in terms of how newspapers themselves are organized: In Austria the people who write news articles about an issue might also write an opinion piece, even in the same issue of the paper, which is out of the question in US newspaper journalism. In particularly strict cases, the news staff might not even be allowed to communicate with the editorial staff, as interviews I conducted with journalists suggest. This might reduce feedback between opinion and news sections of newspapers. Furthermore, it might point to stronger professional rigor in terms of impartiality. This would explain, for instance, the higher tendency of the *Times* to frame the Cuban-American resistance as such (and in a more detached sense) and not as defiance.

We can see some differences in frame prominence, which speak to the division of tabloid and broadsheet. The higher salience of the kidnapping frame in the *Post* speaks to the higher affinity to conflict and the often proclaimed "sensationalism" in tabloid journalism (Bennett 2007; Blumler and Gurevitch 1995:203-221; Esser 1999). This also lends itself to evoke emotions—another tabloid focus. Furthermore, the legal provisions frame occurs more often in the *Times*, which is explained by two things: 1) There is more official discourse (the emitter of this frame) overall in the *Times*. 2) It is also more receptive towards this kind of discourse, which is on a purely factual level or rather pointing to this level and rather an attempt to de-energize the emotionally charged debate by public officials.

Narrative Analysis

HOW A CUSTODY CASE TURNED INTO A CONFLICT OF FREEDOM AGAINST OPPRESSION

The story is initiated by a disastrous event: Elián González is found on Thanksgiving Day (25 November, 1999), dehydrated and clinging to an inner tube on open sea by two fishermen. His family in Miami insists, opposing his father and Cuban authorities, that Elián should stay with them in the US. Instantly, an international conflict erupts. The narratives that mark the beginning of the opposing claims and provide the ground for later discursive dynamics are markedly non-officially generated (from a US perspective). Editorials of both paper advocate, from the beginning (although the *Times* only in the wake of the first official assessment), for a reunification of son and father in Cuba.⁶² Nonetheless, media representations are quite different rhetorically as well as substantively in terms of which political claims they are linked to.

The two strongest currents in the discursive space in this phase are two romantic narratives: The Cuban-Americans prompt a discourse of *freedom* that they connect to the collective sentiments of the Cuban-American refugees since 1958. The Cubans launch a counter-narrative of *kidnappers*. Both claims are taken up much quicker and more intensively in the *Post*, which meets the expectation of more conflict-minded tabloid coverage. Moreover, as a tabloid it has a strong emphasis on human interest stories and this level of the case was situated with Elián himself and his Miami family, who are the bearer of the freedom narrative. Later on, the circle of narrators is extended to the Cuban-American community in

⁶² See: *The New York Times*, 06 January 2000, p. A24, *New York Post*, 01 December 1999, p. 44.

Miami and supporters who held vigils at their house.

Cuban-American refugees, symbolized by Elián, are the heroes of the freedom narrative who went through unimaginable difficulties and impediments to leave their families to escape the oppressive regime that would not allow them to leave. Together with the American people the refugees are the bearers of the American dream –the cultural soil for freedom to thrive. As Alexander argues, it is not untypical for immigrant groups to act this way, since “in their quest for inclusion into the world of civil society, the excluded so often try to re-represent themselves as patriots.” (Alexander 2006:198) Utilizing the democratic code of American civil society (Alexander and Smith 1993; Baiocchi 2006), the protagonists of this narrative are described as autonomous, free, and trustworthy. Their escape from the grips of tyranny is framed as a sacred path for a better future.

Unsurprisingly, this story is narrated more emotionalized in the *Post*:

THERE is something immaculately pure in any human who risks his life for the simplicity of what we take for granted: freedom. There is something we all envy in such a human. Oh, we say we would do the same if given a chance. But somehow, somewhere, some way, we avoid the chance, and we never perform the ultimate service: sacrifice. (*New York Post*, 29 November, 1999, p. 5)

A banner of the Cuban American National Foundation, the main Cuban exile organization, sums up the essence of the story to the NYT:

“Elián González , 5 years old, survived by hanging on to an inner tube alone for two days in the ocean...His mother and another nine Cubans drowned in the Straits of Florida on Thanksgiving Day, trying to reach FREEDOM. After 40 years, this is the result of Fidel Castro's failed revolution.” (*The New York Times*, 4. December 1999, p. A10)

Herein lies the polluted side of the narrative, the anti-heroes mainly represented by Fidel Castro but also Castro-loyal Cubans and Elián's family in Cuba. Utilizing the counter-democratic code of American civil society, these actors are viewed as oppressed, secretive, and dependent, thus as enemies of freedom and democracy. Claims for reunification with the surviving parent that are immediately put forward are denounced, based on this polluting discourse. To take an example from the *Post*, the lawyer of the Miami family, Spencer Eig, accepts this argument but counters that “when the father is living in the hell that is totalitarian Cuba, it's a different story.”⁶³

Anti-communist discourse is among the most common elements throughout the debate (see Table 6). Only much later, when the effects of repetition and interference with more pristine narrative constructions take its cause, it becomes a basis for denunciation of comments made by Elián's Cuban family members. Before that, however, this discourse is so powerful that even Elián's father's claims for his son before the American press and on “free soil” are dismissed based on alleged manipulation by the Cuban government. Juan Miguel Gonzalez is consequently framed as not speaking from his heart but as a puppet in Castro's anti-American political game:

“I'm concerned that he [Juan Miguel González] may not be fully free to speak his mind,” said Spencer Eig, a lawyer representing the boy's relatives in Miami. “In his heart, he may be saying, “Thank God my son made it to the U.S. and is now living in freedom.” (*The New York Times*, 4. December 1999, p. 10)

⁶³ *New York Post*, 30 November, 1999, p. 4.

I already mentioned that one reason for the density of this narrative is its unavoidability when focusing on the human interest aspects of the affair, which the *Times* is not innocent to as well, and having to cover “all sides of the story” by professional code. Surely, the motive for conveying such statements might be exposing their outrageousness (the other option being to ignore them). For whatever reason, the American press chose the first path. Furthermore, anti-communist discourse might still resonate well in public discourse as Cuban-American relations were and are still problematic (amongst other reasons).

The freedom narrative is, in addition, enhanced by religious mysticism, particularly further along in the affair, almost as if to protect the freedom narrative from wearing off rhetorically. It frames Elián as the chosen one and his advent on US soil as god’s will. Stories of dolphins who guided him to the coast⁶⁴ and epiphanies of Virgin Mary in his room⁶⁵ serve as evidence for this. While this story is apparently successful for mobilizing Cuban-American support on the ground, it emerges at a time when the Cuban-American cause already raises resentments and media mostly used them to ridicule them.⁶⁶

Especially with this narrative construction, a stronger opposition is created in the *Post*, which from the beginning gives more voice to Cuban-Americans (especially the Miami family, in particular Elián’s so-called surrogate mum, cousin Marisleysis González). This is relevant insofar as claims for what is in the best interest of the child, which are raised from all sides, are based on what Elián himself is said to have expressed, which we see less in the *Times*. The *Post*’s news coverage has consequently more room for the Miami family to make claims based on what the six-year old boy himself wants. It is important to note here, especially in comparison with Austria, that even though the *Post* is considered the most partisan newspaper in the US and disagrees with the Miami family’s cause it gives voice to these arguments.

The counter-narrative in turn pollutes Cuban-Americans, Elián’s Miami family, and the Cuban-American National Foundation as being driven by criminal intent, kidnappers, as abusive, and exploitative. Furthermore, this narrative has an anti-capitalist tone and frames the Miami family as blinded by materialism, as a response to Elián being showered with presents and public appearances at Disney World.⁶⁷ Castro, who is quite present initially and also attacking the US government, fades away as the story progresses. This is certainly due to the fact that the Clinton administration agrees to reunite Elián with his father. The *Post*, however, pushes this polarizing discourse of Cuban versus US further, if not by actual statements then by reminding of previous statements by the Cuban president.⁶⁸ Furthermore and later on, Elián’s father and grandmothers step in as narrators of the story and keep it alive or rather re-invoke it in the context of the defiance narrative where it finds more symbolic resonance than in the initial phase.

⁶⁴ *The New York Times*, 30 January, 2000, p. 1-16, *The New York Times*, 29 March, 2000, p. E9 (Elián himself recounting the story in ABC interview).

⁶⁵ *New York Post*, 28 March, 2000, p. 5.

⁶⁶ *New York Post*, 29 March, 2000, p. 9, *The New York Times*, 29 March, p. A16.

⁶⁷ See *New York Post*, 16 December 1999, p. 26.

⁶⁸ See *New York Post*, 26 April 2000, p. 37.

FROM HEROIC RESISTANCE TO TROUBLESOME DEFIANCE

In January 2000 the custody case about the six-year old boy becomes the center of a domestic political conflict in an election year. It is initiated by the decision of the Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS) that Elián must go home, which is followed by riots that paralyze Miami (135 people are arrested). The Miami family delays handing over Elián legally by applying for asylum on his behalf and later by disobedience, even when his father already came to the US, until he was taken by force on April 22nd 2000. The Clinton administration and most Democrats side with the INS to reunite Elián with his father in Cuba while several Republican politicians support the Cuban-American cause. Vice-president and presidential candidate Al Gore departs from Clinton's position and advocates for a custody court to deal with this matter but remains ambiguous about his own preferences. This move would be later perceived as a fatal strategic error in his presidential campaign as it caused intense criticism from both sides of the conflict for being motivated by political opportunism⁶⁹ and it becomes evident how news media covering this case contributed to this interpretation.

The Cuban-Americans narrate their protests as a story of resistance in which they view themselves as strong, unified, and resilient. On the other hand, they put the INS, Janet Reno, and Bill Clinton in the position of villains, who are marked by conciliatoriness towards Fidel Castro which is equalized with making a pact with evil.⁷⁰ It is only mildly polluting as a broader anti-American discourse would compromise the freedom narrative, which is based on framing the Cuban-Americans as "good Americans."

Emma Garcia, security director for Alpha 66, a paramilitary group that has sought for decades to overthrow Mr. Castro, said: "This has unified the community in the last few days. ... People had grown distant from the cause. Time has passed. People had lost their will, their enthusiasm. Now people are fighting shoulder to shoulder. ... Many Miami exiles are angry with President Clinton, saying he caved in to political pressure from Mr. Castro. (*New York Times*, 07 January 2000, p. A12)

Elián's lawyers said they will fight Reno and file a federal lawsuit next week to reverse the INS, which ruled in favor of the father last week. "The U.S. government continues to deny Elián his legal and constitutional rights," said family lawyer Spencer Eig. ... [Lazaro] Gonzalez said he was assured by INS officials that Elián would not be taken by force from his Miami home. "They said they wouldn't do that, and I believe them. I have faith in U.S. law that it will not allow this little boy to be picked up like a piece of luggage," Gonzalez said. (*New York Post*, 13 January 2000, p.9)

Later, as the standoff becomes perceived as problematic, defiant, and as threat to the rule of law, this story gradually transforms in media discourse and was overpowered by a stronger counter-narrative. This might be conceived by what Goffman (1986: 43-44) calls "keying" – a "set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else." Whereas representations of resistance were first

⁶⁹ This maneuver served as one explanation why Gore eventually lost in Florida, not so much because he was not successful in gaining votes some argued he wouldn't have gotten anyways (Hispanics and Cuban-Americans in particular) but because it mobilized people to vote for his opponent who would not have voted otherwise.

⁷⁰ See *The New York Times*, 07 January 2000, p. A12, 22 January 2000, p. A9, *New York Post*, 07 January 2000, p. 18.

quoted but hardly criticized, they were later either negatively evaluated by other sources or news commentary. The dominant narrative shifts from the romantic genre to satire, progressively through increasing levels of moral discourse and irony, which is according to Fry best described as a “parody of romance: the application of romantic mythical forms to a more realistic content which fits them in unexpected ways. ... Irony is consistent both with complete realism of content and with the suppression of attitude on the part of the author.” (Frye 1973:223-224) Irony exposes grievances through exaggerating the more or less obviously deficient status quo:

Elían's relatives in Miami should be applauded for refusing to let Mr. Gonzalez take custody of his son in this country while the legal drama plays out. What child psychologist wouldn't agree that it is more important for Elían, at this formative age, to spray Silly String in Diane Sawyer's golden locks than to be restored to his own father? While the wishes of a biological parent should be respected, the lawyer for the Miami branch says, all decisions must be made according to "what is best for the child." Let's be blunt. Dads are a dime a dozen. What is best for the child is to take full advantage of his cachet in the U.S. of A ... The kid will need representation. He can't go back to Cuba. There isn't a decent publicist on the entire island. And we must always do what's best for the child. (*The New York Times*, 02 April 2000, p. 4-15)

In its full-blown satirical form, this narrative focuses on grotesque (the Miami standoff). As opposed to more harmless irony, satire is “comic as a weapon.” (Berger 1997:157-174) Satire has a clear moral impetus and contrasts the absurdity of the real world with an ideal state, strengthened by a clear official order to reunite son and father which is to be executed by state authorities. As a consequence of this narrative shift, characters switch positions. The Cuban-American now are the villains, characterized as defying the law, politically opportunist, and in the last instance even violent, emotional and unpredictable. Hence, they are not merely annoying any longer but in fact dangerous. Hence, the discursive legitimization for taking action, if necessary by the use of force, was set:

"We think the child should be rescued," said the pediatrician, Irwin Redlener ... In a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno and Doris M. Meissner, the head of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, he wrote that Elían was being "horrendously exploited in this bizarre and destructive ambiance." (*New York Times*, 19 April 2000, p. A19)

An article in the *Post* titled “RAFT BOY IS LOCKED UP IN PRISON OF ABSURDITY” contrasts this notion with the quest for freedom:

Since Monday, Elían hasn't been allowed to leave his cell by the relatives who say they are fighting for his freedom. The boy can't even go to school. He hasn't been to a playground. He hasn't even walked around the block. The relatives and the supporters who keep a vigil say Elían's life is better inside his prison than in the cellblock he would share with his father in Cuba. This public display of child abuse must stop. (*New York Post*, 31 March 2000, p. 5)

As this is largely a polluting discourse, the purified side of the narrative is mostly left out or implied. Since polls suggested that a majority of Americans were in favor of reuniting Elián with his father in Cuba, it can be inferred that this discourse was purifying the “sane majority” that still puts a father’s right to be with his son over the question of whether they will live happily ever after in democracy or totalitarianism. At times, Janet Reno, impersonating the state, appears on this side of the narrative and is framed as a peacemaking, considerate, and careful character who recognizes and respects the sacred bond of the family. However, in the wake of the seizure Reno’s precaution is increasingly interpreted as

weakness by both papers (reflected by the passiveness frame)⁷¹ but more strongly by the *Post* as it uses every opportunity for criticism against the Clinton administration. This marks the most drastic contrast to the *Times*, which also criticizes the administration but on a more factual level than personal attacks, which are raised by the *Post* particularly after the raid.

An important element is the idea of exploitation (which is also indicated in Table 6), which rings through in the previous quote but which forms a narrative of its own. A range of different characters are viewed as benefiting from Elián's personal misery while acting in their own political or commercial behalf. Next to the Cuban-Americans also politicians who take side with them, the US government (for using this to improve relations with Cuba), the public's thirst for sensationalism and the media, however, from the point of view of the respective paper—*other* media. The tragically yet heroic position in this narrative is Elián himself and primarily his father, who is the only ones who can claim pure intentions (parental love) but who is surrounded by people guided by instrumental interests. Attempts to pollute the father's interests have widely failed. A *Times* editorial holds domestic political interests responsible (here exemplified by Al Gore) for Elián's ordeal:

As he panders to the Cuban-Americans of South Florida who want to defy both United States law and common-sense morality by keeping Elian Gonzalez from returning to his father in Cuba, Vice President Al Gore presents a spectacle that is dismaying but unsurprising. For decades, it has been a truism that anyone aspiring to national office will cater to the most extreme and fanatical elements in the Cuban exile community rather than stand on principle. Backing their demand that Elian be given permanent United States residency status, Mr. Gore plays into their attempts to delay and obstruct Elian's return. (*New York Times*, 02 April 2000, 4-15)

In this context, other custody cases are discussed, which did not involve such long procedures and where children were extradited to the home country of one parent against the will of the parent who remained in the US.

As mentioned above, the media are a key exploiting agent. In fact, most of metacommentary belongs in this category, surprisingly more so in the *Post*, even though or precisely because it is more immersed in human interest stories on site at the house of the Miami family. It even concedes to be part of the problem: "We're all guilty as original sin."⁷² However, for the most part TV coverage is the focus of debate. One particular incidence under discussion is an interview (while the ABC call it a "visit") with Elián, which draws critique of unethical journalistic conduct for lacking parental consent and for leaving out the crucial parts:

Ms. Sawyer broke what appeared to be the real news yesterday: "The relatives in Miami say Elian repeatedly insists he does not want to go back to Cuba," she said. "He told us that, too, but in this inflamed climate, on this inflamed subject, we thought it best not to broadcast the exact words of a 6-year-old child." ... Then why broadcast the exact words of a 6-year-old child in the first place? And why leave out the child's opinion, an integral part of the story? ... The president of ABC News, David Westin, defended the interview. ... He said the network decided not to show the scenes in which Elian said he wanted to remain in Miami because it feared they would be taken out of context and used for political purposes. (*New York Times*, 29 March 2000, E9)

The big story, consequently, is the story not told in the broadcast but off camera, namely

⁷¹ See *The New York Times*, 19 April 2000, A23, 20 April 2000, p. A27, *New York Post*, 15 April 2000, p. 14.

⁷² *New York Post*, 30 March 2000, p. 120.

that Elián himself does not want to leave the U.S., as his Miami family has repeatedly claimed. Reno responds “patiently”, as depicted by the *Times*, that she believes this was actually Elián’s true wish while qualifying it by comparing it to when she was a child and did not want to go home after she had spent the weekend at her grandmother’s.⁷³ Nonetheless, the third party witness account give the claim of Elián’s best interest was to live in freedom a symbolic boost. This is not enough, however, as the legal and discursive pressure on the Miami family increases and so they decide to shoot their own video of Elián which they distribute to TV stations. The video (subsequently termed “hostage video”⁷⁴) shows Elián sending a message to his father, asking him not to take him back to Cuba. It initiates controversial debates, not only because of suspicion that Elián was pushed to make this statement but also because most major TV stations broadcast it. Besides journalism and politics, the voyeurism of the public is blamed for this media frenzy by Frank Rich in the *Times*:

The Sawyer "visit" was not only an exploitation of a child for commercial purposes but emotional self-aggrandizement in the guise of reportage. "His eyes ask a question -- how can the U.S. government enforce the law without hurting a little boy?" intoned the heart-tugging Ms. Sawyer. Maybe, but how do we know he didn't just need a nap? This disingenuous venture was even less honest, and no less creepy, than the flat-out propaganda video subsequently staged by the Miami relatives, in which Elián cried out "Papa, I don't want to go to Cuba!" ... It too had its network premiere on ABC. Television had no choice but to air that hostage film (though not incessantly) -- it was news. ... Yet it's too easy to shovel all the blame for Elián's exploitation on the media, or on the Miami relatives who've embraced this "Truman Show." Complicit in the equation is a large and willing American audience that is all too compliant when children are used as props to sell it something, whether entertainment, prurience or the agenda of a politician (Cuban or American). (*The New York Times*, 22 April 2000, p. A13)

As the standoff at the house of Elián’s Miami family goes into its final phase, the anticipation of closure is almost unbearable, even though it will almost certainly involve physical violence and to end badly for either or all sides. Unlike the Zogaj affair, where narrative updating progressed more gradually, the second nucleus of the Elián González case boils down to three minutes which would lastingly change the narrative structure of subsequent discourse.

THE SEIZURE OF THE SYMBOLIC CENTER

A key event of the affair is the raid on the house of Elián’s Miami relatives. Not only does it again spur metacommentary, particularly about the dramatic picture by an AP photographer who is inside the house during the raid and for which he wins the Pulitzer Prize in the following year. (see Fig. 1) It shows a federal marshal at gunpoint confronting a man who holds Elián in his arm (and who later turns out to be one of the two fishermen who rescued Elián on the sea). The raid is also followed by intense criticism against the government from both sides (more fiercely, however, in the *New York Post*) and by the most intense riots on the streets of Miami since the affair started.

⁷³ See *The New York Times*, 02 April 2000, p. 4-3.

⁷⁴ See *The New York Times*, 14 April 2000, p. A29.

FIGURE 1 FEDERAL AGENTS SEIZE ELIÁN GONZÁLEZ FROM THE HOUSE OF HIS FAMILY IN MIAMI



2001 Pulitzer Prize; Alan Diaz
Courtesy: *The Associated Press*

Two narrative constructions emerge from and about this event: One is a story about *excessive use of force*, which views Elián and Cuban-Americans in the position of tragic heroes who have fallen victim of this force and whose human dignity has been violated. Reno, the federal agents who execute her order, and Clinton are portrayed as overly fearful and exhibiting a propensity to violence, as not acting in Elián's best interest, as sneaky (they came at dawn), and abusive:

Dalrymple [the fisherman who rescued Elián] grabbed Elian and hid in a closet as INS agents smashed through the home's chain-link fence and front door with a battering ram. Armed agents ripped up the relatives' house - tossing a saint statue to the floor, tearing a bedroom door off its hinges, knocking a picture of Jesus Christ off the wall and threatening to shoot Marisleysis and Dalrymple. "They trashed my room," Marisleysis said. "They broke the closet door. They broke ... they broke Elian's bed." (*New York Post*, 23 April 2000, p. 5)

Marisleysis Gonzalez said: "I looked at those machine guns and I said, 'I beg you. I beg you. Please don't do this. There are kids in this house. They didn't care. They put guns on my cousin's head right there. 'You move I'm going to blow your brains out.' " Psychologists had instructed the Justice Department that a Spanish-speaking immigration agent, a woman, should hustle Elian out of the house with reassuring words. The guns, the gear, the masks, the tear gas, were all necessary, Ms. Meissner said. "We had information, a great deal of information. Some of the information included the possibility that there might be guns." (*The New York Times*, 24 April 2000, p. A1)

Both quotes are exemplary for descriptions of the raid in each paper. The *Times* mostly quotes from the Miami family but even so in less dramatic words than the *Post* itself chooses. Furthermore, and most significantly, the *Times* always contrasts these quoted accounts with notions suggesting a clinical procedure and the imminent danger (as above), building on the defiance narrative. Although, as we have seen throughout the case, almost all narrative constructions were visible in both papers, both of these aspects speak to the fact that the narrative dominating the aftermath of the raid in the *Times* was the one discussed below.

Opinion in the *Post* on the day after the raid is ambivalent yet strong, denouncing the government for taking out the raid as well as apologetic voices siding with the Miami family. In the *Times* editorials back the raid is a necessary evil but criticize Reno for not continuing negotiations (this claim is not to be found in the *Post*).⁷⁵

As mentioned earlier, the backdrop for this event is the Waco catastrophe,⁷⁶ which Reno was held responsible for and the *Post* pushes with utmost intensity.⁷⁷ In an editorial the *Post* even backpaddles from an editorial from the day before in order to be able to make this claim more convincingly and please their readers. They initially call the raid inevitable, which was met by fierce letters to the editors:

"It is becoming increasingly obvious that we were wrong. Not only was there no apparent need to send machine gun-bearing cops crashing into the house - but there was no legal basis for doing so, either. ... [I]f Bill and Janet are looking increasingly like liars, it's because they are." (*New York Post* 24 April 2000, p. 46)

⁷⁵ See *The New York Times*, 23 April 2000, p. 4-10.

⁷⁶ After reports appeared about child abuse at the headquarters of the Branch Davidian sect, it was sieged and finally raided by authorities. During the raid a fire broke out and killed 82 people, 25 of which were children. Janet Reno took most of the blame for the catastrophe.

⁷⁷ See for instance *New York Post*, 23 April 2000, p. 8, 24 April 2000, p. 6, 26 April 2000, p. 26.

As early as on the day after the raid poll results are released that suggest that a majority backed the raid and that “only 40 percent said the federal government ‘used too much force.’” (*The New York Times*, 24 April 2000, p. A18). This was also used as an explanation why Senate hearings died about a week after the raid.⁷⁸ Polls furthermore reveal that the public is oversaturated with the issue as a whole,⁷⁹ contributing to the fact that this narrative does not permeate the *Time’s* news about the case beyond the initial outcry, unlike the *Post* where it remains a recurring theme (and where these poll results were not mentioned).

As the excessive use of force narrative, the second narrative has been building up before the raid but in anticipation of it. It runs counter to the one above and draws its discursive energy from previous polluting discourse against Cuban-Americans, namely depicting them as defiant, exploitative, unpredictable, and thus dangerous. The legal provisions frame also supports this narrative in order to de-emotionalize and sanitize the debate around the raid. The tragic hero of this narrative is Janet Reno who is, on the one hand, the maintainer of law and order and acting in Elián’s best interest, on the other hand encounters such a recalcitrant power, the Cuban-Americans protesters around the house, that she is forced to resort to extreme measures. The villains are unpredictable, ready to use violence and, worst of all, abusive to the child who therefore needs to be saved. As mentioned above, this is the dominant narrative in the *Times* and while this theme is present in *Post’s* coverage, official statements in this category are strongly criticized.

The weaponry, officials said, was needed to ensure the safety of Elian and the agents. The authorities were concerned about the possibility of violence from small numbers of political extremists believed to be among the demonstrators. At a news conference today, Ms. Reno said that she had received information that there might be guns “perhaps in the crowd, perhaps in the house” and that agents were armed as a justifiable precaution. (*The New York Times*, 23 April 2000, p. 1-1)

It was shortly before dawn on Saturday, when Ms. Reno who was still on the telephone trying to negotiate a solution, ordered a raid of the home of Lazaro Gonzalez, who had refused to hand the boy over to the Department of Justice. Dozens of armed immigration agents surrounded the house and sprayed tear gas while a female agent rushed the terrified boy into a waiting van. ... The operation took about three minutes but has led to days of rancorous debate about whether it was justified. (*The New York Times*, 26 April 2000, p. A1)

The paper keeps repeating the imminent danger emanating from the unpredictable crowd around the house, which is estimated in the amount of 200-300, justifying the use of force even more.

After Elián and his father are reunited the latter promises not to leave the country until the asylum hearing of Elián is decided upon in court, although nobody truly believes that it would come to such a hearing. When all legal measures are exhausted by the Miami family, father and son leave the country on June 28th 2000.

The *Times* significantly tunes down coverage after April 30th and widely remains on the level of legal discourse. Although the *Post* is also forced to reduce coverage since the human interest stream of the story declined abruptly after the reunification and the raids in Miami

⁷⁸ *New York Post*, 29 April 2000, p. 9, *The New York Times*, 03 May 2000, p. A22.

⁷⁹ See *The New York Times*, 26 April 2000, p. A1.

die away, it sustains the agitation in discussing the issue. Firstly, it stays receptive to the Miami family (whom *Times* basically ignores subsequently). Secondly, it insists on and capitalizes the excessive use of force narrative in its dismissive political discourse against the Clinton administration until the last minute. On the day after Elián left the U.S. with his father, an editorial argues in one of the rare instance where the issue is framed in a wider political context:

His best interests lie in a lasting, stable family relationship with his surviving parent - a father who, whatever his other flaws, obviously cares deeply for him. Which is not to say that the Clinton administration doesn't have a lot to answer for concerning its handling of this - particularly the Easter weekend armed invasion of the Miami home where Elian was staying and the uncalled-for public vilification of the Cuban-American population. But the Elian case is having a lasting political impact: Witness the landmark move by House Republican leaders to approve, for the first time in 40 years, limited sales of food and medicine to Cuba - albeit with severe restrictions that will make such sales all but impossible. (*New York Post*, 29 June 2000, p. 34)

Discussion

Measures of plurality of debate and the narrative analysis in these two cases suggest a higher level of external pluralism in Austrian papers compared to the US papers. In other words: The two Austrian papers were more different from each other than the US papers. In the US, consequently, reading *one* newspaper exclusively (which is becoming less common through online newspaper consumption) there is a higher likelihood to be exposed to a wider range of discourses about issues, even in tabloids. Of course this only involves whether different debates are presented at all, not if and how they are evaluated. Concerning the latter issue, the US papers do not fall behind, as the measure of dominant position shows. Even in the *Times* we see more evaluation than the overt strategic ritual of objectivity (Tuchman 1972) and voicing all sides of the story suggests. Besides the fact that for the reader the editorial division of opinion and news is irrelevant, the news also draws moral boundaries, although on a more subtle level of how arguments are framed, evaluated, and how (and which) stories are being told. The above mentioned hands-off approach (all sides of the story) is certainly a consequence of US journalistic professionalism and both Austrian paper, but particularly *Krone*, chooses a more authoritative voice. It might also resonate better with the notion of liberty, the discursive utilization of which is inconceivable in European public discourse to its extreme (e.g. claims against health care reform based on the idea of liberty). What effect these two models have on public opinion formation cannot be answered here, however, it is certainly the case that one is more consciously perceived than the other.

Although it is apparent that the *Post* used every opportunity to criticize the Clinton administration in the context of the Elián González case and generally used a more scandalizing tone, political polarization did not translate as drastically into news discourse as in Austria, except in the *Post* after the raid. This shows especially comparing the two broadsheets. Overall, this points to higher political parallelism in Austria. Not only were editorials about political discussions surrounding the issue in stark contrast to each other in both papers in Austria, but some issues were downplayed or blocked out of coverage in both papers, e.g. *Krone*: the parliamentary caucus, xenophobia; *Standard*:

the fact that the Zogajs sought asylum formally but have not been in need of political protection.

Furthermore, what is striking about the two cases is that both were highly politicized and actors from all sides attempted to monopolize it for their purposes. However, in Austria discourse was much more dominated by political elites vis-à-vis civil society actors and average citizens than in the US. Even though both cases touched on substantive political issues (Cuban embargo, rights of the child, and illegal immigration in the US; immigration, integration and xenophobia in Austria) there was hardly debate about these broader issues in the US. Instead most articles dealt with specificities of the Elián case. The opposite if true in Austria, where debates about the Zogaj mostly branched out to these other issues. Also striking is that there is more criticism against the political and legal system in Austria. While the case might lend itself more to this kind of debate, part of the explanation is also personalized politics. Even though there was a clear party distinction in the Elián case (Republicans siding with Cuban-Americans), this was not discussed as much as specific politicians advocating for one side or the other.

The *New York Post*, representing the US-American tabloid, is more conflict-minded in first phase than *Krone. Standard* was more prone to polluting discourse against political action in the first phase. In this sense *Krone* deviates from its format, which usually highlights conflict, no matter for which cause. If it is a political cause, it seems to have higher priority than conflict. This difference might also be a consequence of higher commercialization and more competition on the tabloid market in the US, indicated by the concentration indicator in Table 1. Unsurprisingly, both tabloids focused more on human interest stories. 11% of stories in the *New York Times* would fall in this category (23% in the *Post*), compared to 7% in *Standard* (27% in *Krone*). In terms of its human interest focus, it is again quite typically tabloid, and more informality as well as anti-elitism is another common denominator. In the *Post* we see more impetus to report all sides of a story, even though it might often not conform with its editorial position. For instance, due to more human interest stories, there is more representation of what Elián allegedly wants, although editorially they push for reunification with his father from the very beginning.

In another sense, however, the two tabloids resemble each other: In several phases of the drama their position became ambivalent. This reflects the fact that, as tabloids, they are in a position of the field where heteronomous principles of distinction are more prevalent whereas their own stances based on professionalism are less important. In other words: They have more incentives to give in to the moods of the mass market and public opinion, which also shows in acts of back-paddling and apologizing to their readers.

The narrative analysis, lastly, reveals in both case studies how the perception of a shift of public opinion and an oversaturation of public attention can serve as cardinal function (Barthes and Heath 1977:93), changing the discursive opportunity structure for actors to make new claims within the public sphere to legitimate subsequent action. In the Zogaj case the shift was directed against the protagonist who ultimately lost the struggle, in the González case it was directed against the protagonist's kidnappers who ultimately lost the conflict.

Professional Discourses

Metacommunication

Both cases experienced intense coverage in all media within the journalistic field. This alone and an apparent awareness that media not only covered those stories but influenced them in significant ways led to metadebate about what media should (and should not) do, why they do it, the power media exercise and forces that have an impact upon them. I distinguished the content of those debates in four dimensions, will discuss commonalities and differences between the two cases (in this order). The four dimensions are:

- 1) *Heteronomous principles*: forces from outside the journalistic field that influences what goes on within the field and the specific case in particular.
- 2) *Justifications*: how media in those debates justify what they are doing, especially considering problematic issues.
- 3) *Autonomous principles*: journalistic standards that foster the fields independence, which are often times discussed by means of polluting violations of those principles.
- 4) *Media power*: how media exercise power in the public sphere, on other civil and noncivil domains of society.

Before moving to the different dimensions, what becomes apparent quite quickly is that in the Austrian metadebates there is much more reference of the other papers, particularly those which are in this sample (*Standard* and *Krone*).

1) In both cases, the public is discussed as a (positive and negative) heteronomous influence. In the US, the public's thirst for voyeuristic stories is blamed by the *Times* for the sensationalist, human interest-focused reporting that was perceived. In Austria the scope was a much broader one. Firstly, both paper detect a shift of opinion as the Zogaj story progresses and an oversatiation of the public sphere. Secondly, the *Standard* is shocked by the xenophobia in letters to the editors and discussion forums (including its own). What happens in both tabloids is a debate between letters to the editor and the editorial in which both papers felt a need to justify themselves before its readership and even (in the case of the *Post*) admitting that they were wrong initially (and backpaddle).

Despite this, differences prevail. While the US papers thematize the role of strategic communication (in explaining the media frenzy), in Austria the interconnectedness of politics and the press were debated. *Krone* criticizes *Standard* of specific press-party-parallellism (the axis green-salmon-pink (to express that *Standard* is associated with the Green party). *Standard*, on the other hand, criticizes (after initial astonishment on *Krone's* Zogaj-friendly coverage) *Krone* for being ambivalent and opportunist. Another problem of heteronomy discussed in the US is the dependency on visual representations. This becomes quite apparent in the last phase of the media drama, after Elián was seized from his Miami family's house, when the flow of pictures suddenly interrupts and thus coverage fades quickly.

2) There are no commonalities in terms of justifications, which happened only punctually. The only recurring issue is that both US newspapers explain why Elián is an ideal story for media to cover (and, consequently, why *they* have to cover it as well). The point is exactly that it not only contains a human interest part but that it includes farther reaching problems, which is partly debated in the *Times*, which argues that it might only be about voyeurism and the coercion of newsworthiness.

3) Both cases and all four newspapers discuss the issue of media ethics quite expansively and interestingly both considering TV coverage. In the US case, in the context of the ABC interview with Elián and the broadcasting of the home video the Miami family published (repeatedly called “hostage video”), the discussion is about how far media can go, especially in terms of interviewing a child without parents’ consent and withholding delicate information. In the Zogaj case, there is no real debate about how far media can go but definite accusations against ORF (the Austrian public broadcasting company) are raised for outright manipulating the course of events. This, apparently, does not lead anywhere and is not taken up again later on. Apart from that, the issue of confidentiality (of anonymous sources) was discussed negatively by *Standard* (e.g. in an Op-Ed written by ORF reporters⁸⁰, positively by the *Times*, which argues that, in case of doubt, professionalism must triumph over public responsibility and local interests).⁸¹

Competition between different media outlets and newspapers in particular, were an issue in the US case, not an issue in Austria. Particularly after the raid, in the *Post* and *Times* there are not only discussions about the symbolic of the AP photograph but also the competition for headlines and differences of layouts and what this means for editorial emphases.⁸²

4) The power of pictures is an issue in both cases and for all newspapers and one of the few of the discussed effects that is positively connoted, since it turned out to be a measure to hold authorities accountable. The suicide video of Arigona Zogaj “unsettled” authorities⁸³, the AP picture of the federal agent who seized Elián from his rescuers arms at gunpoint demanded the US government to legitimate itself for the use of force (that was perceived as “excessive”, due to the picture). The *Post* even insinuated that the appeals court judges were affected by the homevideo in which Elián said he wanted to stay in the US (reflected by their critique against INS for disregarding the boy’s opinion which might have an effect on asylum decision).⁸⁴ All papers reflect, furthermore, on the possibility of causing irreversible harm on children in particular, to victimize and deny them to ever lead a normal life again. Most other issues dealt with detrimental media effects, dividing communities, interfering (negatively this time) with the rule of law or with the course of events. It is interesting (and possibly telling) that an interference with the rule of law is explicitly desired in the Austrian case, in contrast. This is telling because of the overall tendency of questioning institutions and structures (in the Zogaj case) versus individual action (in the González case), which corresponds to the generally more personalized democratic system and political culture in the US.

A main difference is that the Austrian papers tend to attack each other specifically (by name), which does not happen in the Gonzalez case. Particularly the *Standard* keeps referring to *Krone*’s enormous political power: That the VP will not be able to sustain its hardened position without *Krone*’s support,⁸⁵ politician’s lamenting being “blackmailed by media,”⁸⁶ that “politics of the party headquarters is increasingly made in editorial offices of the tabloids,”⁸⁷

⁸⁰ *Der Standard*, 15 October, 2007, p. 23.

⁸¹ For instance: *New York Post*, 27 April, 2000, p. 30, *New York Times*, 27 April, 2000, p. A22, *New York Times*, 24 April, 2000, p. A22.

⁸² For instance *New York Post*, 23 April, 2000, p. 28, *New York Times*, 24 April, 2000, p. A22. A rather strange episode told of a incidence in front of the Miami family’s house when a *Post* reporter allegedly stabbed a cameraman, who was in her way, with a pen (*New York Times*, 20 April, 2000, p. A1).

⁸³ E.g. *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, 14 October, 2000, p. 10.

⁸⁴ *New York Post*, 20 April, 2000, p. 22.

⁸⁵ *Der Standard*, 09 October, 2007, p. 32.

⁸⁶ *Der Standard*, 11 October, 2007, p. 3.

⁸⁷ *Der Standard*, 27 October, 2007, p. 32 (German original: “Dass die Politik der Parteizentralenzunehmend in

and that a headline in *Krone* that reads “Minister Fekter under fire” is equivalent with a request to resign and that an interior minister without support from *Krone* has a low chance of political survival.⁸⁸ Finally, as the former chief editor and publisher of *Krone* died mid June 2010, a commentary asks the ironical question: “Which hand is going to lead public opinion in the right direction, who is going to explain the great big world to us over a coffee? He will be missed.”⁸⁹

CONCLUSION

Most striking is that both cases discuss the public as heteronomous influence on the journalistic field. In the US more in terms of its thirst for voyeuristic stories and local interests, in Austria more in terms of broader societal problems – of an oversaturation of the public with people who receive too much attention and of a society that is pervaded by xenophobia. Only in the US solutions for the admittedly more media-centric problems are discussed – ethical standards and professional rigor.

Whilst the PR machinery is seen as a problem in the US, press-party-parallelism is deemed as a fundamental problem for journalistic autonomy in Austria; the difference of political systems leads us to expect Austrian papers to be more closely aligned to political parties. Furthermore, what is striking is the relative absence of positive effects of media power (power of pictures is an exception) in metadiscussions, and the predominance of discussing *Krone* as the central problem of the Austrian public sphere and *especially* the political class.

Interviews: Research Procedures

I conducted 22 interviews for this project, 14 in the US, eight in Austria. The average length of Austrian interviews was 48 minutes, in the US 70 minutes. I conducted these interviews in two places, Albany, NY and Graz, focused on reporters who cover state politics, and used the same interview guide. This means that the sample of reporters goes across news organizations. In Austria I spoke with journalists of seven different, in the US of eight different news organizations. Most of them are newspaper reporters (as far as they are merely newspaper reporters these days). In the US only one is a TV reporter, six are reporters from three wire service companies (two of which serve newspapers). Of the remaining seven reporters, three are working for tabloid newspapers, four for broadsheets. In Austria, all are newspaper reporters, three work for tabloids, five for broadsheets. Most of the interviews I conducted at their work places, which means editorial offices in Graz and the State Capitol Building in Albany (where journalists have offices). A few reporters I interviewed in their homes (those I either knew longer from when I used to work as a journalist (in Graz) or had a personal connection (mutual friend) to) or in coffee shops, one on the telephone. The conversations took place under the condition of anonymity and a consent form was signed from every respondent, as protocol for ethical research in American universities requires.

The sampling strategy is only fully explained by the research design of my dissertation (which I cannot get into in detail), where I focus on reporting practices in political settings,

den Redaktionen von Boulevardblättern gemacht wird”).

⁸⁸ *Der Standard*, 23 January, 2009, p. 2. (German original: “Ministerin Fekter unter Beschuss!”)

⁸⁹ *Der Standard*, 19 June, 2010, p. 27 (German original: “Welche Hand wird künftig die Volksmeinung so souverän in die richtigen Bahnen lenken, wer wird uns bei einer Melange die große Welt erklären? Er wird fehlen.“).

observing and interviewing journalists as well as comparing news coverage they produce systematically. The greater part of what I asked in the interviews concerns specific interests for my dissertation and specificities of places under study, which I am not going to report here. In the context of this project, issues related to journalistic values and ethics (one part of the interviews) appear useful to get a better understanding of the media cultures under study.

The number of cases in both settings are too small of course to make claims about the journalistic culture as a whole. At the same time, it is not fair to treat them as mere singularities, since these actors are, after all, embedded in a professional culture and not just isolated lone warriors (although they are mostly correspondents). Even though news organizations tend to have more or less flat hierarchies, these spun-off reporters are far from being free agents. In their own experience they have free reign and directives from above are mostly lenient. This might, however, only be a consequence of having internalized forms of organizational control, which are again not arbitrary but conditioned by an institutional field and professional culture. Consequently, my claims will seem too bold (referring to Austria and US) at times for the data basis. I do not assume representativeness but instead try to put forward a concretized theory of journalistic cultures, concretized by some empirical evidence instead of none (which seems to be common practice also).

Another issue concerning the rationale to analyze the data that should be mentioned has to do with preferences. I do not believe these people have perfectly ordered preferences and convictions about everything I ask them, even though it all relates to their day-to-day activities which they (hopefully) do have some form of understanding about. I do believe, however, that there are differences between answers that are being probed for and answers that are given in other contexts. For instance, when I talk to them about journalistic values and they *do* mention source relations as a problem to be considered means something else than when I ask them directly about source relations (which usually happened afterwards in the interview) or when they talk about it after I have probed them directly. By an large, I focus on the respective section, at times, however, I draw from other sections when my interviewees make it a point to frame what they say as journalistic values or ethics.

Journalistic Values and Professional Ethics

AUSTRIA

I initiated the section about journalistic values and ethics by asking them for what they consider bad journalism. Mostly this led them to talk about what they consider journalistic values themselves but if not I asked for that in the second step. Not surprisingly, the expectations raised for good journalism were different with tabloid journalists as with broadsheet journalists. Or to put it differently: Journalistic values for tabloid journalists were more modest compared to others. With this I mean for instance accuracy and curiosity, which are surely shared by broadsheet journalists also but maybe not mentioned in this context since they are basic compared to the standards they expect for good journalistic practice. One commonality across the cases, however, is fairness as a central virtue. One journalist defined bad journalism as: “Fabricated. [laughs] I mean, not based on facts, tendentious, badly researched und thereby unfair. One can also do good research and still

report unfair.”⁹⁰ If fairness was not mentioned directly it was expressed implicitly – the requirement to talk to “the other side” (as opposed to one-sidedness), which is prevalent for US journalists as well.

Never, neither in the values discussion nor in the rest of the interviews, did anybody go beyond the notion of talking to *the* other side, of representing *the* opposite position in the sense of acknowledging that there might be a variety of different perspectives on issues. Even if they give voice to multiple actors in practice – given the multiparty, proportional political system in Austria – it suggests a perception of bipolar political conflict as in the US. It also suggests that civil society actors are either irrelevant or can only cling to the predefined political opportunity structure, as resource mobilization theory would suggest (Jenkins 1983). This might be unfair to my interviewees, since they would certainly agree if I asked them whether they find multiperspectival reporting important. However, the fact that they did not raise this issue themselves is somewhat telling, especially compared to US reporters where this problem received at least some attention in the values discussion. One interviewee was at least ambivalent on this issue. On the one hand, he described talking to and be critical towards all parties as a way to prevent jeopardizing good rapport with sources and avert the perception of political alliance. On the other hand, as he criticizes one of his competitors for a bad story, he argues that good journalism “does not have to consider all sides, this is less of an issue, but [even] as a tabloid you can do sufficient research.”⁹¹

In the above mentioned category of more extensive notions of journalistic values and ethical standards would be allusions to ideas of public responsibility, viewing the press as a forth estate that acts as a watchdog for the other three branches of power. One reporter even invigorated Habermas when he stated:

Good journalism is one that is, in simple terms, devoted to the principle of enlightenment; which believes that the public sphere can be structured rationally where the best argument will ultimately pervade.⁹²

A common theme was the question of autonomy and independence, which was discussed on two levels: Relationally and editorially, the first one referring to interpersonal relations to political sources, the second one to news coverage itself. While these issues are interrelated in the sense that if relational autonomy is not given this possibly affects news coverage in a negative way. They are still different kinds of problems, one antecedent to the other. Ultimately, the finished product is what counts and relational autonomy is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for editorial autonomy. How they actually deal with this problem is an issue on its own, in the interviews as well as here and to be discussed below. In terms of relations, journalists across the board mentioned that being friends with politicians is unacceptable and that they have to be kept at arms length in order not to be instrumentalized by them. As one reporter argued, “one basic virtue, I think, should be incorruptibility, as far

⁹⁰ German original: “Erfundener [lacht]. Also nicht faktengestützter, tendenziöser, schlecht recherchierter damit, unfairer. Man kann ja gut recherchieren und trotzdem unfair berichten.”

⁹¹ German original: “Nein, das muss gar nicht alle Seiten berücksichtigen darum geht es weniger, aber man kann da [auch] als Boulevardzeitung ausreichend recherchieren.”

⁹² German original: “Guter Journalismus ist so einer, der, ganz banal, dem Prinzip der Aufklärung verpflichtet ist; der daran glaubt, dass man einen öffentlichen Diskursraum rational strukturieren kann und dass die besseren Argumente irgendwann einmal durchdringen.”

as this is even possible.”⁹³

Reporters of broadsheet newspapers were most explicit concerning this issue, by drawing boundaries to tabloid journalists (or those on the margin of it) who they said would socialize, go for drinks, and be friends with politicians. Not surprisingly, those journalists they were referring to themselves did not raise this issue. Broadsheet reporters also criticized the degree of informality in interpersonal relations (given that there is a formal and informal form of address in German) while admitting themselves to call political actors by their first name.

Considering news coverage, there is a common notion of unacceptability to transmit political messages uncritically. Journalists, who used to work in the party press at the beginning of their careers (the last party presses only disappeared at the end of the 20th century), saw this as a main advancement in Austrian journalism which was not the case when they started out in the job. One of my interviewees, however, makes the opposite point that new media induced a decline of critical journalism and that reporters are turning into stenographers for politicians (again).

Opposite to that, Austrian journalists expressed an acceptability to take a stance, which is an expected contrast to US reporters (although there are some exceptions). In other words: Bias is acceptable as long as it is based on autonomous journalistic judgment. Of course this might “accidentally” coincide with positions taken by political actors. One reporter made this quite clear when she argued for subjectivity in journalism, asserting that objectivity and mere descriptive journalism would inevitably lead to political communication:

We set our own focuses ... as opposed to earlier. The way I learned journalism was that you would go to a state assembly meeting and report a sentence of each speaker, you know? As accurate of a picture of the event as possible. This is long gone: *Wir* set priorities. *Wir* set our own focuses. We decide through the selection alone – what is information and which information will reach the reader. And for this reason we are subjective, you know? One has to understand that. Journalism is not objective, it is not and it has never been. But it is even more subjective today because the selection happens more consciously.⁹⁴

Another reporter was frustrated that her new editor in chief does not pursue as clear a stance on central political issues (such as death penalty) as the former one, which she found necessary and characteristic for her newspaper’s identity. Yet another told me that the most important journalistic value to him was to side with the weak.

Apparently, such subjective considerations must be compensated with a performance of criticism. This is to say, if a paper has certain priorities on which topics to cover or takes a more or less clear political stance, possibly backed by opinion pieces, this is often

⁹³ German original: “eine Grundtugend, glaube ich, sollte auch sein: Unbestechlichkeit, soweit das halt möglich ist.”

⁹⁴ German original: “da setzten wir selber unsere Schwerpunkte ... im Gegensatz zu früher. ... Ich habe Journalismus so gelernt, dass du in die Landtagssitzung gehst und von jedem Redner einen Satz berichtest, ja? Ein möglichst detailgetreues Abbild des Geschehens. Das ist es lange nicht mehr: Wir setzten Akzente. Wir setzen Schwerpunkte. Wir bestimmen allein durch die Auswahl, was Information ist und welche Information den Leser erreicht. Und damit sind wir subjektiv, ja?! Also das muss man auch wissen. Journalismus ist nicht objektiv, ist es eh nie, aber nie gewesen. Aber es ist heute noch subjektiver als früher, weil allein die Auswahl selbstbewusster stattfindet.”

counteracted with being overly critical, especially to those “on the same side”.

Sometimes there is a problem ... if, for example, you constantly criticize one party or the Governor, sometimes you feel guilty and think: Am I still objective? And then it can happen that you go too tough on the non-gubernatorial party just to signal to the outside that you are actually against everybody.⁹⁵

Another reporter even argues that journalists in general are more favorable to the Green party and are therefore overly critical towards them:

Here, I would say, the media landscape is known to be a little Green-leaning, which usually leads, however, to hypercritical [coverage] – especially now in Burgenland [where the Greens lost the election] I think you can see this quite well. In the sense that all these journalists are quite pissed because there is no progress, actually all being Green-leaning but now writing negatively about the Greens.⁹⁶

Going back to the question of autonomy: Interestingly only one reporter discussed this issue in terms of autonomy from market imperatives. He argued that one problem he faces in his (broadsheet) newspaper is an increasing orientation to the mainstream. This shows in directives to write stories in a way that everybody understands them.

I think you don't have to adapt but you can also set standards. This is not an arrogant intellectual stance. Otherwise you grade standards downwards. And this grading of standards downwards is a problem which affects all quality newspapers in Austria. Newspapers are all advised by well-paid people who tell them ‘You have to become broader and more comprehensible.’⁹⁷

US

First of all and most strikingly, the differences in extensiveness of journalistic values between tabloid and broadsheet observed in Austria are not so in the American case. One of the most rigorous (not to say: radical) proponents of classic US journalistic professionalism is a tabloid reporter, whereas some of the most lenient answers come from broadsheet journalists.

On the most basic level of values journalism should adhere to, according to most of the interviewed reporters, is accuracy, fairness, and balance. Furthermore, the drive to seek the truth was associated to journalistic values (and violations of this requisite as bad journalism). This seems self-evident and slightly clichéd but can mean in a very practical sense not to predetermine what one thinks is true or, even more importantly, not to let somebody *else*, namely editors, predetermine what the truth is and then gather the facts fitting this particular

⁹⁵ German original: “es entsteh manchmal ein Problem ... wenn man zum Beispiel die eine Partei oder den einen Landeshauptmann ... permanent prügelt, da kriegt man oft für sich ein schlechtes Gewissen: Ist man eigentlich noch objektiv? Und dann kann's vorkommen, dass man die Nicht-Landeshauptmannpartei zu hart anfasst, nur damit man nach außen signalisiert, also, man ist eigentlich eh gegen alle.”

⁹⁶ German original: “Bei uns, würde ich eher sagen, die Medienszene gilt immer so ein bisschen als Grün-affin, führt aber in der Regel eher zu einer hyperkritischen [Berichterstattung] – ... jetzt grad nach Burgenland finde ich sieht man das ganz gut. So [dass] auch diese ganzen Journalisten ziemlich angebissen sind, weil nichts weiter geht, eigentlich alle Grün-affin sind, aber die Grünen Länge mal Breite runterschreiben.”

⁹⁷ German original: “Ich denk mal, man muss sich nicht anpassen, sondern man kann auch was vorgeben. Das ist keine präpotente intellektuelle Haltung, aber sonst nivelliert man sich nach unten. Und dieses nivellieren nach unten kommt mir vor, ist ein Problem, das die Qualitätszeitungen in Österreich allesamt haben. Die Zeitungen werden alle beraten, von gut bezahlten Leuten, die sagen: ‘Ja, also man muss immer breiter werden und man muss verständlicher werden.’”

version of it. A young female reporter said:

I find a lot of times the more or less dangerous thing in journalism is having editors in an office far away from the situation saying: 'Write a story that says *this*', 'go out and find sources that say *that* and back that up' when you should really start a story by asking a question. And so, to first just tell the truth, no matter what the demands are of the other reporters or tabloids, what they may be reporting that you know isn't true or what somebody up high may say isn't true.

Some even dared to use the word "objectivity" when talking about journalistic values – in the sense of an ideal to be strived for rather than a given of course. Never in the Austrian was it used in this context. There, objectivity was instead identified as an absolute that is impossible to realize and as a way to argue that opinion can never be left out of factual news reporting. In the US interviews, however, more typically derivatives like neutrality or information-driven journalism were used frequently if not objectivity itself, as this reporter argues:

I believe fundamentally our job is descriptive and only that. It is not to make people believe *anything*. ... In this age of ... cheap and plentiful information ... there is a certain disregard for the harder and researched or at least vetted information.

While most of the reporters referred to "the other side" of issues or having to talk to "both sides", some opposed this common notion and argued for a multiplicity of perspectives and arguments and for the need to differentiate more than it is usually done in political reporting:

The other low end is just being sloppy, in terms of not making sure that you are getting all your... you know stuff you learn on the first day of journalism school about getting all sides of the story and all that. In most beats people think that all sides to a story is *two* sides. But, I mean here it's multiple sides to a story. There's so much nuance in covering a government this big. ... It's still a fairly progressive state so there's a lot of things that come up here first that haven't come up in other states.

In general, US reporters were more explicit in expressing more profound requirements on the news they produce as their Austrian counterparts. The issue of opinion seems to be most significant in this regards and the most important difference in the self-understanding of Austrian and US reporters. This is not surprising, given the fact that in Austria it is not unusual that one and the same journalist writes an opinion column and a factually reported piece in the same issue of the paper. The American journalists speak of a metaphorical wall between news and opinion. Most of them don't read the editorial page of their newspaper and don't even know its opinion on political issues they report about. In the case of one reporter there is actually a communicative wall set in place in his editorial office, which means that news reporters are not even allowed to talk or write to editorial writers. In some cases, state editors who also do reporting in Albany have news columns but that focus more on news analysis than on opinion. Almost all US reporters were specific about how important it was to separate their own personal opinions and convictions out of their work, to be able to produce unbiased and unopinionated news. Most importantly, they don't find it problematic, which these examples of two reporters demonstrate:

Bad journalism is opinionated, biased journalism. ... So you get your facts straight, you take the bias out. Whatever your own bias is, make sure you guard against that getting into the story. And you go to the best, to the most perfect version of the truth you can find. And it's actually fairly simple.

I have an opinion on same sex marriage. I do. I'm not gonna tell you what my opinion is. But I either believe that it's a good idea or a bad idea. I don't share that, I don't share that with the readers. I try not to share that publicly, I certainly don't *proclaim* it publicly, because you don't care. You don't care what [name] thinks about same sex marriage, you don't. Fuck me! Who am I? Who gives a shit about what I think? What you care about is how I cover the horse race, how I cover the various sides of things. So that's the issue of opinion. I don't believe that my opinion should play a role.

The latter reporter was exceptional, however, in the sense that he was particularly opposed to the idea of objectivity. Although it is a singular account, it should deserve some attention since it comes from a young newspaper journalist in his 20s who furthermore represents the new generation of versatile newspaper reporters, who are socialized with writing for print and online, who are blogging, taking pictures, shooting video and editing it. It is possible that his version of a professional discourse is a systematic generational phenomenon, which I can't proof with my current data basis but which I will explore further in the near future. He argues that objectivity was not a useful practice or heuristic to be fair but, on the contrary, that a radical interpretation of it would mean that irrelevant arguments would come to the fore and receive undue attention and this would undermine his role as a journalist. He defined this role as utilizing his sensibility:

I believe my sensibility should play a role. ... I can see the debate over same sex marriage, and I can see that one side is completely and utterly dominating the other. I have a duty to point that out. I consider that if one side is millions of dollars behind it and high-placed lobbyists is doing these things that should be noted in my coverage. And my coverage should follow that, my coverage should note how the lobbying effort is going. In other words: I don't feel necessarily a duty to give objective coverage when there is not objective debate. ... I feel that my sensibility has some place in my written work, my opinion does not. And I should strive to not let my opinion skew my coverage in a way that it reflects my views. However, if I have a read on a situation I have no problem in letting *that* guide my coverage. Notice the difference in verbs, I said 'skew' once and 'guide' another time, it's called spin, right? You learn it.

The sensibility he was talking about is a consequence of having covered New York State politics for a while and of having developed a background knowledge about it that enables him to make choices about news relevance that violate a radical interpretation of objective journalism. Furthermore, he acknowledged a certain ambiguity, which other interviewees did not, and reflected about that he thought he did not give me a very clear answer. He explained that this was an issue he struggles with every day and that is never resolved. His perspective brings to mind the account by the Austrian reporter who argued for the importance of subjectivity in journalism.

A striking difference in US interviews was that there was no mention of relational autonomy when I asked them about bad journalism and journalistic values. One exceptional case pointed to the danger of adopting values of sources in whose games you have to delve into as a reporter nonetheless. A mistaken conclusion would be that these reporters have less of a

problem with being close to politicians but I think the opposite is true: The fact that they don't feel the need for negative boundary making as some Austrian journalists seems to speak for the fact that it is not perceived as a common problem as in the Austrian case. In the part of the interview dealing with source relations directly, it shows that there is a wide unacceptability of friendliness with politicians. There are also actual organizational mechanisms set in place to regulate relationships, which are completely absent in Austrian media, even in media organizations of those who criticized colleagues for being buddies with politicians. For instance, some media companies in the US would ask politicians to send them a bill if reporters attend functions they hold. Some journalists periodically receive ethical policies to sign from their news company, which provide guidelines on how to act with sources, regulate the amount of political donations reporters can make, for whom they are allowed to do charity work (e.g. not for organizations which do lobbying or are significant campaign donors), and define maximum values of gifts that they can accept. One reporter who just signed such a policy when I interviewed her even found it too lax. She said the biggest gift she ever accepted was a cup of tea, that politicians gave her their book if they have written one but which she then even gave away.

On the level of editorial autonomy, there was an agreement with Austrian colleagues that simply transmitting political messages is unacceptable. Instead, the goal is to understand those messages, to decode spin, and to have an understanding of the mechanisms and strategies of power. In other words: to understand agendas beneath political statements and actions. One reporter told me he thinks of politics as a game of incentive structures and referred to game theory before he told me how he tests political statements according to underlying interests:

Who has an incentive to fuck who and why? Who has an incentive to help who and why? And you should consider that with every source of information you get and when you're trying to find out a bit of information.

Some journalists took issue with some of their colleagues (hardly named in person) on two levels: 1) They argue that some do not care about being fair and giving both sides (since in the political game in the US it is actually often about *two* sides) equal weight in favor of endorsing specific politicians or publishing exclusive stories by one side in order to hurt the other.

There are some reporters, as I'm sure you know, that are sort of open for sale. You wanna get something.. 'if it's gonna be a really good scoop against my competition, then I'll put it out.' I don't operate that way. I don't need to operate that way anymore and, you know, it goes counter to public service. But it happens.

2) Especially some of the senior journalists criticize that the blogs some of the media companies nowadays (mostly newspapers) have are detrimental regarding editorial autonomy and that they are turning over political messages directly and uncriticized:

I'm not sure that's news anymore. I don't tweet. And I think the people here who are bloggers and who tweet, they're trying to get it right but what they do is, you know: "The Paladino campaign says this terrible thing about Cuomo." And they put it right out there. Unfiltered. Unchallenged. And then a week later Paladino says: "Wow, no I did not mean that, I guess." So they blog it again. And maybe, you know, if they'd taken the time to check it out in the first place and determine and challenge him on it and have him back down a day later, maybe it's a story that doesn't appear, except that Paladino said this on Monday, but on Tuesday he said:

"No." Or maybe it's not a story at all. So, are we the ones who are doing it? I'm not sure that's the case, but I think we're more easily used. We're more easily manipulated.

What is interesting in this regard is that there was hardly critique on the larger problem associated with this kind of reporting, which is known as horserace or strategy journalism. This line of critique against political journalism is that it is less focused on actual policy and the substantive level of politics but on the political game, on who attacks who on what ground, on political advertisement, on who leads in polls and who raises most campaign money. Only one reporter, who is moreover a marginal insider (the clientele of his media company entirely consists of financial and business professionals), expressed his repugnance against reporting polling results:

We've had 27 polls about Governor Patterson being weak in the polls and facing his struggle if he wants to be reelected, let's write a story about that. To me you know that's the next worst because what are you adding? Why waste time to write something that everyone already knows and it's like filler matter?

The issue of public responsibility was also raised quite often in reflecting about journalistic values. This was done not only in a vague sense, as in the rare Austrian cases who talked about this in this context, but actually mentioned practices which would violate this responsibility and talked about their responsibility for public deliberation and voters being able to make better informed decisions. Exemplary for the first way, a state editor for a newspaper said:

Well, there is journalism that I consider bad, because it is harmful to the social fabric; and that is journalism that is unfair. Either unfair to individuals or unfair to the complexity of the issue at hand.

Another reporter, a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism in New York and a subscriber of the Columbia Journalism Review (bastions of the professional discourse of American journalism), was probably the most outspoken advocate for professional rigor and service to the reader as a democratic citizen who bases decisions on his work:

Bad journalism is journalism that isn't focused on the reader and is cutting corners and is doing the bidding of people that are not for real. Journalism is about pursuit of the truth. Anything else you have to question.

...

I do hope that the people who read my stories.. First of all, I hope they understand them. I hope, I'm clear. ... My first objective is clarity. I'm not the greatest writer in the world. I'm far from it. Some of my colleagues write beautiful. Really just beautiful. I don't have that ability. But what I hope is it's clear and I hope at the end of the day they say to themselves: "OK, you know, I read that, I'm gonna go read something else, I'm gonna make a decision." And part of where I'm coming from is, when I used to be a business reporter, people made decisions based on what I wrote. They either made sure they made more money or they lost money. Think about that. You know, your 401k [\$401000 per year] may be affected by what you read that I wrote. So, you know, it's a real responsibility.

Other issues reporters talked about centered more on personal characteristics (and contrasting failures) of journalists which are necessary to be successful and to cover the political world. Having integrity, being straightforward, honest, and trustworthy is perceived as a basis for successful source relations. They are the foundations to acquire exclusives or

background and off-the-records information, which – even when they can’t be used in stories – are so important to make informed news decisions. Asked about journalistic values a senior editor said:

Well, ... obviously keeping your word, being honest with people and fair. But, in a way the business corrects itself because if you don't you won't last in it. You don't have anybody to trust you, so you can't be a senior reporter the way I am. If you have a bad reputation you just get killed off because you get isolated.

Some discussed such personal traits more in relation to their readers, whose trust they have to win and preserve, the latter being harder than the former because it is easily lost.

Another interesting finding, while maybe specific for the press corps I study, is that two reporters who are perceived by their colleagues as being on two sides of the spectrum of good/bad reporting, one considered the most partisan form of tabloid reporter, the other many other reporters referred to as the arbiter of good journalism and whose reporting, they say, is always above the rest, agree in perceiving a tendency that issues are made bigger than they actually are, which is what one of them calls “stretch journalism.” This has certainly to do with the higher volume of journalism produced and mediated through online channels.

CONCLUSION

Even though, one would expect partisanship would be an issue of negative boundary making for some Austrian journalists, it was as much a topic for US journalists, its absence far from being taken for granted. It should be noted, however, that many of them hinted at one particular player in the field of competition in this regard, whom they never referred to by name though. Apart from single “outliers”, a variety of elaborate ways of thinking and practices in order to reach for the ideal of objectivity and neutrality. An important condition, furthermore, seems to be the metaphorical or in some cases actual communicative wall between factual and opinion journalism, which also has consequences for how reporters think about their work and how they guard it from their personal opinions. While the latter also goes for Austrian reporters, they were far less explicit in making such points, which has possibly to do with the fact that most of them also write opinion pieces at times.

Another minor but possibly significant issue has to do with critique against political actors. Austrian journalists spoke about the sometimes unfair compensative critique against actors they are actually sympathetic to or that they don’t have a need to criticize as much for whatever reason (one of which would be power). US reporters, in general, seemed way more skeptical towards political actors of all kinds. One reason for this is certainly the higher stakes in terms of money and power of the New York State political jurisdiction. Another reason, possible a consequence of this, is the amount of political scandals on both sides of the isle which happened in the past five years in Albany, the most famous of which the resignation of former Governor Eliot Spitzer who got involved in a prostitution scandal (prostitution being illegal in New York). One reporter spoke of “fifty years worth of history” in the past three years only. Another reporter, exemplifying the skeptical stance of most reporters towards the field they cover:

I used to say that we weren't going to have true reform in this government until they started dragging people out of here in handcuffs. We have had people dragged out of here in handcuffs for about six years now and we've had no reforms to the process. It gets a little jaded after a while.

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