

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

MA in Digital Media, Communication and Journalism

Department of Conflict and Crisis Journalism

MA Dissertation

Reporting from both sides of the bars
Prison Journalism; a peace-journalistic tool



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Thessaloniki, 2020

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Abstract

From a peace-journalistic perspective, evolvement towards a conflict-free society is only possible, if underrepresented minorities get included into the journalistic discourse. A group whose standpoint has been severely underrepresented in the past is the group of inmates of prison facilities. Intending to challenge this status quo, this thesis discusses different approaches within the prison journalism spectrum in Austria and Germany. Through literature and content analysis, the historic and social background of Prison Journalism in the two countries gets explained. Subsequently, as prison journalism is a seriously underresearched topic in social sciences, expert interviews lead to new perceptions. The focus lies on three different concepts of prison journalism from both sides of the bars, which is why the study includes activists from prison unions and participants of prison newspapers as well as classic mass media. Comparing the approaches and states leads to the location of common issues, such as varieties of censorship or discrimination. Those are then used to construct multiple pillars to enhance the condition of prison journalism, including the legal situation, the creation of solidarity groups, the support of political parties, the generation of financial support and the plurality of the mass media sphere. This thesis aims to evolve the concept of peace journalism, by constructively shedding a light on the benefits and drawbacks of such coverage in contributing to a more minority-inclusive and conflict-resolving media sphere.

1. Introduction

Media coverage has been criticized in the past for its dominantly dualistic approach in offering only win-lose situations when covering conflicts. The idea of a peace-journalistic discourse challenges this trend by pointing out multidimensional aspects of problematic situations (McGoldrick, 2006). Peace journalism envisions a conflict-free society, engaging in a humanist discourse and providing positive alternatives for all involved (Dente Ross, 2006). This praxis requires the representation of humans as individual people, instead of as parts of competing groups (Mason, 2006). One approach to making this evolution towards a conflict-free society possible is to include underrepresented minorities into the journalistic discourse. This is done either by giving them a voice through interviews and statements in mass media outlets or by letting them express themselves through their own means of media. A group whose standpoint has been severely underrepresented in the past is the group of inmates of prison facilities (Hinck, Howell & Schaefer, 2019; Mason, 2006; Novek, 2005; Novek, 2005). Moreover, prisoners are often presented as non-citizens. I argue from a peace-journalistic perspective, that we need to find ways to engage inmates in the journalistic discourse since they play a huge role in conflict resolution in today's world.

Prisons remain a place of secrecy, which makes information by the media about this segregated part of our society rather more important. However, if covered, correction facilities are mostly contextualised in unreflected discourses. It has been shown in previous studies, that prisons are represented rather one-sided in mass media (Mason, 2006). The institution, as well as its population, are constructed in a discourse of fear and dangerousness since generally the most violent offences get highlighted. The media discourse not only promotes the use of prisons as softest option but also its expansion (Mason, 2005). At the same time, incidents of prison suicides or the erosion of prisoners rights are seldomly reported about in the public sphere (Mason, 2006). This stands in relation to the fact that journalists get granted access to prisons if they want to report on the 'positive' side, while covering critical topics often gets denied by prison administrations (Novek, 2005). The prison and trial system itself seems to be believed to be a functioning and fair constitution in the public eye, especially concerning Central Europe in comparison to countries of the Global South or the United States. But as soon as one starts to investigate, multiple misfunctions occur, some of which will be mentioned in this thesis. However, the state's interest lies in those malfunctions not to be reported about, as the state can only be reasoned as fair, as long as its jurisdictional pillar is well-functioning and it stands to be "objective". The tale of prison as a humanist punishment for the justly convicted serves this

cause by ignoring the fact that the system punishes rich and poor differently and thereby recreates racist, classist and sexist hierarchies. Overall, the public opinion on criminal offenders, convicted and released prisoners does not count for an informative coverage or an informed public sphere (Vomberg, 2000).

In regard to this situation and to build a peace-journalistic discourse that includes the underrepresented minority of prison inmates, I suggest three different approaches. The first one is to facilitate access to prisons for professional journalists. It has been shown, that communication about criminalization can change through direct contact and extended conversation with the marginalized. Researchers believe that this community contact could lead to a more truthful and balanced coverage of the topic (Hinck et al., 2019). Short term-visits however, do not always lead to reflected news outlets (Mason, 2006). This is a critical aspect since journalists rarely get granted long-term access. In the past, the only option has often been investigative research by taking jobs as prison employees (Bauer, 2019; Trulson, Marquart & Mullings, 2006). This makes the emphasis on easier and long-term access to interviews with incarcerated people important.

Secondly, a path that has become more vivid over the last years, is easing communication from the inside to the outside and vice-versa through the work of NGOs and representative groups. A special case of such representing groups is the German Gefangenen-Gewerkschaft / Bundesweite Organisation (GGBO), the first workers union of imprisoned people worldwide. As a way of putting their claims in the open, but also giving inmates a platform to voice struggles and problems, they have their own, yearly published outlet which gets distributed for free in prison facilities and sold to interested readers outside of prison walls (Rast, 2014). This can however only work, if the public is willing to invest time and monetary resources in supportive projects.

The third option is the creation of journalistic output from within the prison, to give inmates the possibility to voice their own opinions and report about situations in their surroundings, as well as to reflect the everyday realities of the situation. This goes hand in hand with previously suggested peace-journalistic solutions, to build a more pluralistic media sphere (Hackett, 2006). There have been multiple approaches in the past regarding this issue, overwhelmingly from the US. Novek (2005) suggests dealing with those journalistic outlets as forms of "outsider journalism", which is defined as representing alternative media by marginalized groups in

society. The experts are in this case the ones who built their expertise through everyday lived realities (Novek, 2005).

A prison newspaper nevertheless not only functions as a potentially empowering and equalizing force but simultaneously as a control mechanism that serves repressive functions. Prison newspapers by definition mostly rely on penal authorities to survive, which is why they often only echo institutions. It has also happened in the past, that inmates got sued by their institutions for published stories, heavy penalties have been given out to critical writers and critical stories often got censored (Novek, 2005, Novek, 2005), circumstances which will be likewise described in the upcoming expert interviews. It has been argued, that one crucial aspect to guarantee more independence is financial autonomy, which was managed for example in one collaborate prison newspaper in the US, through the joint work of inmates, journalists and employees of the penalty system (Janusz, 1992). Through new media and social media however, authorities start to lose their grasp on prison media, as it is happening right now in Germany and Austria, where more and more prison Youtube-channels and twitter-accounts pop up, fed over illegally smuggled mobile phones into cells.

Apart from these limitations, most researchers seem to agree that prison newspapers are a primarily positive project for the public sphere, the prison system as well as for the inmates themselves. Researchers have noted, how being part of such projects enables prisoners to survive their incarcerated time with a sense of morale, helps them fight against boredom, improves prison atmosphere and prepares prisoners for re-entry into society (Novek, 2005; Novek, 2005; Valentine, 2010; Warner, 2002). One must not rely on these arguments though, as especially in the US, they serve as reasons for making newspaper projects mainly possible in male prison facilities and not in female ones, as the fear of riots and therefore the urge to create a better atmosphere is higher in the former (Novek, 2005). Meanwhile, it has been shown how prison newspapers lead to low reincarceration rates and, first and foremost, challenge stereotypes of prisoners and help them to be seen as citizens whose living situation is worth more than criticism (Janusz, 1992; Valentine, 2010).

Still, the topic is a neglected issue in scientific research due to conducting difficulties, in contrast to its handling in popular culture, where the prison topic has been heavily dealt with in the last couple of years (a well-known example being “Orange is the new black”). What has been researched a lot in social science is prison literature, as many important theories have been written behind bars. However this interest has not spilled over to prison journalism, which is

why most of the researchers hold the opinion, that future scientific work to strengthen the argument for this topic is desperately needed (Novek, 2005; Valentine, 2010). This applies just as much for the two countries Germany and Austria, on which I lay my focus in this case study. Scientific work on prison newspapers in Germany can be broken down to three papers from the 20th century by Joerger, analysing the historic development of prison newspapers, Vollmer, taking a closer look on possible functions of the papers and Klein, focusing on the description of the working progress inside the prison newsroom (Joerger, 1971; Vollmer, 1980; Klein, 1994). More recent work is only done by Vomberg, doing a qualitative case study on prison newspapers in Nordrhein-Westfalen and Brandenburg as well as Kreißl, constructing an overview over existing prison newspapers in Germany in 2003 (Kreißl, 2003; Vomberg, 2000). Vomberg argues that this lack of scientific research in Germany is due to lacking knowledge of the existence of prison newspapers on the one hand and fear of getting in contact with the prison-institution on the other hand (Vomberg, 2000). If the topic is taken up, content analysis plays the main role, while ideas and goals of prison journalists tend to be neglected (Vomberg, 2000). In Austria, the situation is even worse, as there seems to exist only one dissertation on the topic of prison journalism. Schober discusses the “Insider“, a prison newspaper conducted in the prison of Graz-Karlau (Schober, 2006).

Comparing these two countries is furthermore interesting, as both have a long history of conducting prison newspapers. And although the two neighbouring states seem to be similar regarding their prison politics and policies at the first sight, Germany’s prison papers have not only existed for years, some for decades, but also they multiply and are now accessible in nearly every German state. In Austria however, prison newspapers tend to only exist for a short period of time and at the moment, none are being published. Therefore, the question arises: What leads to the huge discrepancy of prison journalism (both in practice and in theory) in two neighbouring and seemingly alike countries?

For this reason, I am going to choose examples of projects covering the three mentioned approaches in a European context: One prison newspaper, written by inmates, one journalistic project working towards easing the access to prisons for professional journalists and two NGO/prison union attempts.

1.1 Chapter Outline

The aim of my research is to locate the advantages and disadvantages of the three approaches in the chosen countries Germany and Austria, and define from a peace journalistic perspective

the aspects that have to be worked on in the European media prison coverage. By constructively shedding a light on advantages and disadvantages of the coverage, I try to contribute to a more minority-inclusive and conflict-resolving media sphere. By reason of mapping out the utilized methodology, chapter two introduces the qualitative research approach, research questions, significance and the research design. Chapter three offers an insight into the historical background of the prison situation in the two discussed countries, Austria and Germany, as the state of prison journalism is highly interconnected with the role the prison industry plays in our society. This chapter also contains an excursus to popular culture and the prison topic, to show other possibilities of making issues of criminalization visible, as well as to put an emphasis on the need for prison journalism. Chapter four gives an introduction to the interview partners, as a way of creating an understanding of their working structures. The introduction is followed by a thematic analysis of the held interviews, which is structured into different topics such as reasons for taking part in prison journalism projects, similarities beneath the interviewees, problems, structural issues, a comparison of Austrian and German prison journalism and success stories. This analysis builds the base for a structured way of answering the key questions of the study, at the end of which I propose multiple pillars of change, through which a more extensive inclusion of the prison minority into a peace-journalistic media sphere might be done. Chapter five provides a summary of the study outcome as well as fields for further research.

2. Methodology

This chapter caters to explaining the methodological approach of this dissertation, including my research questions, the significance as well as the research design.

2.1 Research Approach

While working on this thesis, I am utilizing a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is a useful research tool in social sciences, to further investigate specific cases, interpret them in a detailed way and, by that, answering the key questions of the study.

2.1.1 Research Questions

As I aim to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches of prison journalism in this dissertation, as well as comparing the two states Austria and Germany, to find possibilities to create a more minority-inclusive media sphere, multiple questions arise as the foundation for the study. Through my work, I want to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How can prison inmates be given a voice in order to create a peace journalistic discourse?

RQ2: What effects do the approaches have regarding the inclusion of minorities?

RQ3: What are the difficulties of today's approaches?

RQ4: How can the approaches be improved?

RQ5: What leads to the major differences of conducting prison journalism in Germany and Austria?

2.1.2 Significance

To my knowledge, there seems to be a severe lack of research when it comes to prison journalism in Europe. Most of the research that has been done about prison newspaper projects comes from the United States (Hinck, et al., 2019, Novek, 2005; Trulson, et al., 2006; Janusz, 1992; Valentine, 2010; Warner, 2002). Research about prison and media in European countries predominantly consists of literature analyses of media with the aim to reveal discourse strategies in regards to prisons (Mason, 2006). Also, there is only little evidence of NGOs or other frameworks to ease access to prison facilities for journalists. Taking this into account,

there appears to be not much research on a theoretical basis, while on a practical basis, journalists and inmates in Europe seem to be left alone when they try to break through the bars. My research is supposed to find possibilities to ease communication about correction facilities from behind as well as from outside the bars.

Furthermore, my research opens up the concept of peace journalism. In the past, peace journalism has mostly been seen in opposition to war journalism (Biazoto, 2011). Hence, the concept was applied to promote an alternative in covering conflicts involving war and military invention. Dente Ross (2007) takes a look at exchanges between peace journalism's advocates and its opponents. A deeper and more practical re-conceptualization of constructive media through peace journalism is possible if the discussion is transformed from the battlefield, since reporting of conflict and enhancing peace are only part of peace journalism's broader perspective of inclusive reporting, as she argues. This goes hand in hand with perceiving media as parts of the global hegemony which emphasizes inter- and intra-state differences. However, she limits the concept of peace journalism to a measurement against war propaganda within the same argument (Dente Ross 2007). This is why research such as Biazoto's work from 2011, applying the peace-journalistic theory to a non-war stricken country and arguing that the lack of war not necessarily guarantees peace, is already seen as broadening the theory. As Biazoto (2011) points out, the peace journalism framework provides a possibility to transform or overcome conflict through a demystification of violence and a destigmatization of conflict parties. Concerning that, I expand the concept further. My argument is that peace journalism does not need to be applied to a war- or post-war situation, or to a country in which violence leads to a certain number of deaths. In my opinion, the general criticism that the theory brings up in regard to those situations can be likewise applied to situations that are considered to be peaceful in mainstream discourse but are nevertheless affected by conflict when taking a closer look. This goes for the jurisdictional and prison system.

I base my paper on the peace-journalistic criticism of mainstream journalism, indicating that journalists frame conflict in a consensual manner by mostly following the official line (Suleyman, 2006). As already described in the introduction, research has shown that this is what mainly happens within prison reporting, as state institutions are framed as the rightful ones, while prisoners are being dehumanized (Mason, 2006). This dehumanization leads to an extensive process of othering, not as often described in peace journalistic theories between national states (Tehrani, 2002), but as Dente Ross (2007) has mentioned, in an intra-state way of creating citizens and non-citizens. The Us vs. Them argumentation exists likewise in a

war zone in Africa as in a so-called labelled western European democratic country. To this situation, I apply the normative, peace-journalistic premise: “ (...) if media play a negative role in terms of increasing the tensions between and among the sides of the conflict, they can also play a positive role by promoting peace“ (Suleyman, 2006). *For the context of this paper, peace journalism is understood as the normative idea of journalism enabling peaceful reporting in a conflict-riddled environment, namely the penitentiary system, to lessen the process of constructing prisoners as “Others“ and finding ways to empower the voiceless, in this case, prison detainees, as it is so often called for in peace journalistic work* (Dente Ross, 2007; Tehranian, 2002; Suleyman, 2006).

Moreover, in past research, prison journalism has been set against mainstream journalism. Churcher (2011) equates the term prison journalism with inmate produced journalism, prison publications and prison press which, according to her, exist in the United States since 1800. In her definition, Prison Journalism even stands in opposition to prisoners publishing their output in mainstream media, such as the Black-Panther-member and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. This is, as she puts it because he is dependant on mainstream journalism, of which the loyalty towards prisoners is affected by audience interest (Churcher, 2011). This way of communicating from behind the bars could not be taken up in this dissertation, as it is rare and does at this point not exist in Austria or Germany. Novek (2005) uses Prison Journalism as a synonym for a prison or inmate newspaper. She defines Prison Journalism as a way of “outsider journalism“, publications outside the norms and standards of mainstream media (Novek, 2005). I am introducing a broader definition, which is why this paper is called “Prison Journalism from both sides of the Bars“. In my research, prison journalism is understood to be inclusive of all forms of output generation with a focus on the incarceration system. This includes mainstream journalism as well as NGO-press work. The definition is broader than in previous papers, for the sake of including as many possibilities to increase the amount and quality of prison society reporting as possible. As previously mentioned, I am aiming to present the advantages and disadvantages of prison coverage, which is only possible if as many approaches as possible are included. Additionally, strengthening the contact between inmates and mainstream journalists might change the mainstream media take on prison topics (Hinck et al., 2019). For those reasons, I apply these axes to supply my dissertation with the intention of creating minority-inclusive reporting alternatives in the field of prison journalism, driven by a peace journalistic discourse.

2.2 Research Design

Past researchers in the field of prison journalism have worked mainly with literature analysis or discourse analysis (Mason, 2006; Novek, 2005; Thomas, 2011; Janusz, 1992; Joerger, 1971; Vollmer, 1980, Klein, 1994; Vomberg, 2000) and participant observation (Novek, 2005). Despite that, using the method of participant observation was only possible in past studies, if researchers started a prison newspaper on their own and therefore witnessed the whole process. I do not have the opportunity for such long term research. Moreover, a simple discourse analysis would not be helpful for my thesis, as I want to add new data to an underresearched field. In the field of prison journalism, the main issue is the small amount of information that already exists, which is why I conduct an exploratory study. Just as Schober (2006) and Vomberg (2000) have approached the issue in Austria and Germany, I conduct qualitative interviews to fill the existing gap.

2.2.1 Data and Instruments

As previously shown in the introduction, little to no scientific literature exists about the field of prison journalism in Germany and Austria. For this reason, I decided to include content analysis in my dissertation, to offer a small overview on the subject of prison newspapers that can be found in archives as well as to give information about the topics and self-descriptions of the media discussed in this dissertation. As Vomberg (2000) points out: “Through combining interview and content analysis, claim and reality can be compared“.

Proceeding with my interviews, I cover three existing approaches in the field of prison journalism – prison newspapers written by inmates, prison union work as well as the side of the professional journalists. Therefore, I work with triangulation of data, to include the perspective of inmate journalists, unionists and professional journalists. Through using different sources, I minimize possible biases of the researched groups (Brown, 2001). Furthermore, I conduct semi-structured expert interviews, a special form of guided interviews. Expert interviews are especially useful, if the structures, functions and interests of a social field are supposed to be researched, which is what I am doing (Schirmer, 2009). Also, I will profit from being able to ask more questions about the topic during my research and the information content (Flick, 2006). My interview partners are representatives of the groups that I analyse and have expertise in the research field (Flick, 2006). The reasons for choosing the following experts are described below.

2.2.2 Participants

As the first case to choose my participants from, I decided to get access to the staff of the prison newspaper "Der Lichtblick" (engl.: "the ray of hope"). The newspaper exists since 1968 and gets published in Germany in the prison of Berlin-Tegel. As already referred to, a core critical point of classic prison newspapers is that they are censored by facility staff and therefore often fail to shed a realistic light on issues behind bars (Novek, 2005; Novek, 2005). "Der Lichtblick", however, prides itself for getting distributed 7500 times to other German prison facilities as well as to the German public and 60 000 clicks on their homepage per month, without any revisions by prison guards or other staff. Through my research, I could not find another project in which inmates are allegedly as free as here to voice their ideas, which is why I chose this newspaper as a way of best practice. By this, other European prisons might get inspired to replicate the programme and problematics in the best practice example can be located. On top of that, interviews with the prison journalists of "Der Lichtblick" have been granted in the past, which is why I hoped to get permissions for conducting my research in the JVA Berlin-Tegel easier, than in other facilities. Conducting interviews with prison journalists from Austria is not possible, since, as prior mentioned, at this point prison newspapers do not exist. Austria is nonetheless covered in the other two sections, as well as in the historical overview.

Secondly, I talk to activists of the German prison union GG/BO, as they created a new mean of communication with introducing the first prisoner's union. Through their medium "Outbreak" they inform people behind and outside of the bars of ongoing problems in German prisons and lobby for their main demands, which are a minimum wage and social security for imprisoned. Simultaneously, they create a space for inmates to voice their own criticisms in their newspaper. Furthermore, I talk to the Austrian activists of SiM who, as I explain in greater detail in the main part of my thesis, have taken over the prison newspaper "Blickpunkte" after it became illegal to conduct a medium in Austria whilst being a judiciary employee. The "Blickpunkte" and the SiM are the closest one can get to a prison newspaper as well as a prisoner's union in Austria at the time this thesis is being conducted.

Thirdly, I investigate the challenges and advantages of classic journalism covering prison society. To do this, I talk to a journalist who has been known in the past for focusing on the topic, despite researching difficulties. The journalist has been chosen because he is one of the few in the German-speaking area who focuses on the jurisdictional system, while publishing in Germany as well as Austria. For this reason, I hope to make comparing the journalistic structures of the two countries possible.

2.2.3 Analysis

After conducting expert interviews, I perform content analysis. This analysis is used to identify patterns within the generated data to locate commonalities and differences. The content analysis becomes necessary for this research, as the amount of existing research is very limited. While Vomberg (2000) provides an overview of the German prison media sphere, such an analysis does not exist of the Austrian one. Through analysing approachable prison newspapers which have not been discussed before, an overview of the existing Austrian prison media sphere is made possible and allows for a deeper insight into the topic. Moreover, I thereby expand the research for the sake of accurate analysis, by contextualising the data within the historical and political background of the two countries prison journalism'. The analysis stands therefor in relation to a socially criticizing approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). This part of the analysis can be found in the following chapter, "Popular Culture and Historical Background". Content analysis is furthermore employed for describing the interview partners in chapter four.

For the sake of discussing the semi-structured expert interviews, I apply a thematic analysis. Through the processes of unitizing and coding, I am able to constitute units that cater to my research questions, regarding the effects of prison journalism, as well as advantages and disadvantages and ways of improvements. To structure the collected data as well as to ease the comparison and the presentation of the results, I assign various titles to different topics. Those are then used to answer the previously listed research questions in a narrative way including summaries as well as direct quotations. The before mentioned expert interviews provide the base for this analysis. The analysis eases defining the relation of the triangulated experts to each other (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The thematic analysis is done in chapter four, "Breaking through the Bars".

3. Popular Culture and Historical Background

The main part of this thesis gets introduced through an excursus. Its inclusion serves to show other possibilities making (issues of) criminalization visible, which are otherwise not focused on in this paper. Moreover, the excursus helps to put an emphasis on the need for prison journalism. Thereafter, the historical background of the prison situation in Austria and Germany gets explained through literature and content analysis. This stands to be important, as the situation of prison journalism is highly interconnected with the role the prison industry plays in our society. This role is, as will be shown, changeable.

3.1 Prison in Literature and Popular Culture – A Small Excursus

As previously mentioned, a well-covered topic in Central Europe in contrast to prison journalism, seems to be Prison Literature written in and about prisons. Particularly with regard to the lack of scientific research of prison journalism and profound journalistic output, it is notable how the public interest in the social justice department becomes visible in literature and popular culture. This excursus serves to make a point about how urgent an emphasis on publishing minority-inclusive prison reality is needed as well as apparently wanted. It also gives a small insight into different possibilities of covering the prison and justice system, where the lines of journalism are often blurred and are otherwise not majorly discussed in this thesis.

3.1.1 New Journalism, Popular Culture & New Media

Prison literature is a tradition which many well-known writers and political actors have followed through with, prominent examples being Antonio Gramsci or Rosa Luxemburg (Gramsci, 2019; Luxemburg, 2000). Since then, prison stories relying on true events stayed in the public interest. Later on, the theme became widely discussed in pop-culture, with a hype in 1966, after the publication of Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences". Capote's work offers background information on the reasons of two previously seemingly cold-hearted killers (Capote, 2000). In his book, Capote creates empathy for the suspects and humanizes them, to an extent for which he became heavily criticized by the public. Nevertheless, through his novel Capote created the genre of New Journalism and showed how writing a novel about a true story can be as exciting and interesting as fictional literature (Feuerherd, 2018). Afterwards, writing an investigative journalistic report with stylistic devices became fashionable. Until today, the New Yorker serves as prominent example.

Another publication which became famous and decorated with Emmys and Golden Globes, mainly for its screening as a series on the online streaming-portal Netflix, is the fact-based novel “Orange is the New Black – My year in a Women’s Prison“ by Piper Kerman (2010). The novel, reporting about the situation in US-American Women’s Prisons, stated a re-introduction of the critical prison story telling hype, which is shown through the creation of multiple NGOs and media outlets. Kermans’ case is pretty unusual and differs from the way typical inmates are viewed in the public eye - A white, wealthy woman getting sentenced for drug trafficking with her back then girlfriend. However, one important factor for Kermans’ succes as a writer is her safe social background. As punishment for her offence she got a comparably milde sentence and managed, also with the help of her supporting family and friends, as she repeadetly mentions in her book, to re-integrate into society. Kerman uses her experience and abilities to report about her story and the prison situation in the US (Kerman, 2010). She herself keeps pointing out how rare her case is and how many other women in prison do not have the same chances as her. This is why she started an NGO that is trying to enable women in prison to write (Kerman, 2010). Prison writing generally has been promoted by PEN America, since the PEN Prison writing program was founded in 1971. The organisation provides writing resources, mentors, audiences and holds an annualy prison writing contest (PEN America (Ed.), 2019).

Some other attempts to cover the topic of prison society were made in 2019. As way of example, Rachel Kushner sheds a light on the background of women ending up in prisons and thereby shows how the social background is intertwined with the likeability of getting sentenced to prison (Kushner, 2019). To make this causality visible, she cretaes a rather cliché destiny of her main character: A girl, who works as a pole dancer gets a twice-life long sentence for murdering a man who, as a former client started to stalk her. Since she stems from a socially difficult and low-class background, she is not able to pay for a private lawyer and has to deal with an overworked public defendant which leads to the nearly highest possible punishment for her for killing a veteran (Kushner, 2019). However obvious Kushners’ attempt is, she manages to point out several critical aspects of the American prison system, such as the transgender debate, the backwards way the complex deals with protests as well as the one-sided definition of violence in the jurisdictional code (Kushner, 2019). Her novel “The Mars Room“ has been rewarded with the Booker Prize.

Furthermore, the publication “Herr Wang, der Mann der vor den Panzern stand“ takes a different approach, as Liao Yiwu chronicles in a romantic and poetic way of writing, as it often appears in Chinese literature, his correspondence with the German state and diplomats during his efforts to free the writers Liu Xiaobo and Liu Xia before their death (Yiwu, 2019). In addition to that, he tells the personal stories of fellow prisoners he became to know while doing time in China as a consequence of the protests on the Tian’anmen-Place in June 1989 (Yiwu, 2019). Yiwu therefore takes his own experiences and skills to establish a broader public gaze on the ongoing in his former home country, from his exile in Germany.

On top of that, true-crime-podcasts as well as series are booming, playing with mechanisms of suspense to keep listeners interested. Even many traditional newspapers have expanded to broadcasting true crime episodes on streaming platforms, to keep their audience diverse and interested. Examples of those in the German-speaking area are “Verbrechen“ (engl.: Crime), by the German weekly newspaper “Die Zeit“, “Spurensuche“ (engl.: Search for traces) or “Faking Hitler“, both by the German weekly magazine “Stern“, just to name a few. International examples are “Conviction“, with the New York Times journalist Saki Knafo, “Detective Trapp“ and “Man in the Window“, both funded by the LA Times. The podcasts deal with the topic through various approaches. Some are tracing specific cases for multiple episodes, some cover one story per episode, some have a theoretical and explanatory approach by interviewing experts such as investigators or psychiatrists and some are following one specific person like a detective during their everyday work life. They have one thing in common, they all follow an increasing true crime trend.

3.1.2 Underrepresented Prison Journalism

As one can see, a long-lasting and worldwide literary debate about the prison system exists and not only creates a wide discourse, but is also rewarded with prizes and recognition. So why does prison journalism not get the same administration and financial support as prison literature, which besides its success, already is an underdeveloped field? It seems like fictional prison writing, as well as poetic writing about what has happened years back is acknowledged, while up-to-date prison journalism is underrepresented in mass media and science, even though it did get honoured with writing prizes in the past (Churcher, 2011). This probably, as I hypothesise, stands in relation to the reduced political brisance of reporting on a topic from the far, the past or in a fictional approach instead of shedding a light on it while it is happening. As it is shown in this dissertation and other research papers, prison systems and societies of countries world-

wide are severely unfair and malfunctioning complexes, not in the past and not only in countries of the Global South. As the jurisdictional pillar in our society is seen as an objective, fair procedure, critical voices threaten this view, which could open up a discussion about the apparently best-functioning system after all. This is a debate that endangers existing societies, which is why the topic is so well short-circuited.

An exception is made in 2019 by Mother Jones-reporter Shane Bauer, who took a position as prison guard to report undercover on the conditions in an US-private prison. Underlaid by explanations of the historical background of the private prison industry, he elaborates on multiple malfunctions in the system, mainly lacking funding for the sake of operating as a private for-profit organisation, and his own experience of taking up the behaviour of an aggressive guard the more time he spends in the environment (Bauer, 2019).

Getting journalists into the US-prison system is a start, which needs to be advanced world-wide on a critical, non-fictional and up to date level. Meanwhile, it is just as important to form critical voices from within incarceration, especially as there lie so many resources in time and knowledge, as Yiwu (2019) writes in his letters to his wife from prison (which he wasn't allowed to send or let anyone know he was writing): "The thoughts of a prisoner are onedimensional, they can think about a singular sentence for ever and can unfold until the beginning of the world, or until its decay, that doesn't matter".

3.2 Historical Background of Prison Institutions and Prison Journalism in Germany and Austria

Since journalistic access to prisons is highly connected to the strictness of authorities, which relies on the stance of the momentary public debate, it is likewise dependant on the role, the prison industry plays in our society. As it is argued today in the states laws, prison in Germany and Austria is supposed to play two roles: First, it's meant as a measure of resocialisation for the convicted. The definition of resocialisation hereby signifies enabling the former prisoner to live a life without getting into conflict with penalty law anymore (Vomberg, 2000). Prison journalism is often argued for under this perspective. This apparent goal nevertheless only exists on paper, as instead of resocialisation, the penal system leads to negative radicalisation by trying to force inmates into existing social norms, whilst offering the most abnormal social

surrounding. Secondly, it should protect the public from a possible criminal threat which, again, is not realized by the penal system, as it leads to the former mentioned negative radicalisation.

3.2.1 Approaches of Prison Newspapers during Weimar Republic and National Socialism in Germany

The argument of re-integration started to be discussed in Germany during the time of Weimar Republic, however failed to be put into practice (Vomberg, 2000). At the beginning of the 20th century, prison media were introduced as a replacement for general media, which were seen as an dangerous and started to float into the prison institutions (Vomberg, 2000, quoted after Joerger, 1971). The first prison newspaper was the “Gute Freund“ (engl.: The good friend), which was founded in 1901 and existed until 1919 (Vomberg, 2000, quoted after Joerger, 1971). This project was followed by “Die Brücke“ (engl.: The bridge), which served as forum for discussion inside and outside prison walls from 1928 to 1935. Sentiments shifted during the time of National Socialism, when prison was meant to be a mechanism of suppression and therefore supposed to do the greatest possible harm to its inmates, whilst inmates were forced into hard labour to cover the cost of mass imprisonment (Vomberg, 2000, quoted after Dünkel, 1983). The only prison paper in this time frame was “Der Leuchtturm“ (engl.: The lighthouse) and defined to be a “Reichsgefängniszeitung“, a newspaper by inmates of the Third Reich (Vomberg, 2000). Despite the communication goals of prison papers today, the aim of the medium was to promulgate national-socialist propaganda. It was discontinued in 1944 due to lack of paper (Vomberg, 2000).

3.2.2 The German Penitentiary Law & Rise of a Critical Public Debate

After the end of the war “Die Brücke“ was introduced as the first German prison newspaper which was only written by inmates (Vomberg, 2000, quoted after Vollmer, 1980). In the 60s, the idea of prison media as pedagogic measure slowly arose. In the middle of the same decade, numerous prison scandals put the prison system into the midst of the public debate, which enabled a critical awareness of the problematic and often inhumane prison situation (Vomberg, 2000). The critical public debate led to the development of the so-called “Strafvollzugsgesetz“ (penitentiary law), which was enforced in 1977. Vomberg (2000) and others nonetheless harshly criticize the law for describing the society as it should be, instead of painting a realistic picture and offering practical solutions on dealing with the problematics. In this law, the maximum goal of imprisonment is described to be resocialisation, the law however does not give any clues regarding to what should lead to this outcome (Vomberg 2000). The minimum

goal is formulated to be the protection of the general public. This goal is far from being reached through the penalty system, especially through long-time incarceration, since the more time is spent behind bars, the less able to survive in a “normal“ circumstance people become, while at the same time general aggressiveness rises (Wagner 1984,).

The extended public focus on prison facilities, the military complex as well as elderly and psychiatric homes in the 1970s also showed an eruption of multiple prison newspapers. This came to an end with disillusioned hopes for reformation of the penal system when the weak penitentiary law was enforced (Vomberg, 2000). The second boom of prison papers happened in the 1990s, as prison newspapers had been forbidden in the former DDR. As prisoners from Eastern Germany did not have to fear solitary confinement or prolongation of their sentences anymore for taking part in conducting handmade papers, prison media started to pop up all over Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Vomberg, 2000). As a result, in the 1990s prison newspapers existed in every federal state except for Thüringen (Vomberg, 2000).

3.2.3 The Non-Existence of Prison Media Law in Austria

While historical revision of German prison media exist, nothing can be found in Austrian history on this topic. Anyhow, there seem to be some similarities regarding the state of law. The penal laws' goals and (lacking) points how to reach them have not been majorly reformed in Germany since the 1970s. A similar discussion is going on in Austria for decades, where experts are urging for a penal law reform for some time now. Critics about the existing law mainly circle around the fact that the existing law is not up to date with technological advances that have occurred over the last years. In 2019, while this paper is being written, a revision is being enforced. The legal state of prison newspapers in Austria is meddelling between the law of media and the law of the penitentiary system (Schober, 2006). This is especially important regarding the topic of editorial confidentiality, which is secured by Austrian media law. Since the paper is conducted in a penal institution, this is a basic media right which is not granted to Austrian inmate journalists. As a result, prison newspapers in Austria could never be labelled under the official legal term of “newspaper“, as basic media rights did not account for them. As way of example, the former inmate-written paper “Insider“ was officially called an informational brochure (Schober, 2006). Apart from that, no regulation of prison newspapers formerly occurred in penalty law, which is why prison newspapers in Austria were allowed as long as they did not jeopardize prison safety and order (Schober, 2006) – which is a pretty vague definition. As a result of the non-existing legal definitions, it was left to the heads of the

various prison institutions to decide, whether prison media got accepted or abolished. In 2016 however, the Ministry of Justice filed a decree, according to which it is forbidden for judiciary employees to take over functions that fall under the media law (Innerhofer, 2019). This poses a difficulty for conducting prison newspapers, since inmates are allowed to write and layout media, but they are not permitted to function as medium owners or publishers. As a result, the only official medium trying to include prisoners' articles until today in Austria, is run by a non-profit organisation outside of prison.

3.2.4 Content Analysis of Prison Newspapers in Austria

As there is no scientific work on prison journalism prior to Schobers dissertation in 2006, it is difficult to create an overview of the Austrian prison media sphere leading to the situation today. Nonetheless, Austrian prison newspapers have existed for decades which makes it seem rather strange that there is no political framework in which those can be conducted in the country. According to an inquiry Schober (2006) sent to the Austrian Ministry of Justice, four prison newspapers were produced in 2006 in various penal institutions. Official libraries do not collect prison newspapers as they collect most other media outlets. However, radical-leftist libraries in Vienna try to assemble as many outlets of outsider-journalism as possible.

One paper from the unregulated past that can be found is "Schloss und Riegel – Infoblatt zur Situation von inhaftierten und kriminalisierten Frauen" (engl.: Lock and bars – Information about the situation of imprisoned and criminalised women), which was written in Austria's only women's prison, Schwarzau. Dealing with prison newspapers, one can not expect the generally known professional newspaper design, as lack of financial resources often leads to minimalistic creations. Such as with "Schloss und Riegel", which consists of multiple A4 papers stapled together in one corner. Anyways, design is far from being the important point of prison media. The paper was founded in 1980, while the only issue available right now is from 1997. As the name suggests, it concentrated on articles about the situation of female imprisonment, introduced literature by and about imprisoned women and offered historical facts and scientific theories on criminalisation. In their own words, they "shed publicity on the life situation and resistance of imprisoned and criminalised women and support for the affected" (Mayer, 1997). Prison newspapers in Austria have a tradition of being constructed as media of resistance and empowerment, which is why there does not seem to be such a big quantitative difference between male- and female-produced prison papers as Novek (2004) mentions about the state of outsider-introduced media in penalty facilities of the United States of America. This

accounts at least for an abstract level, as there only exists one women's prison in Austria. Nevertheless, "Schloss und Riegel" has been discontinued.

Another available medium is the "Bruchstellen" (engl.: Breaking points), the monthly newsletter of the Anarchist Black Cross Austria, which was founded in the beginning of the 20th century as a solidarity group for prisoners. Mostly double-sided printed on an A3-paper, it informs about ongoings in prisons worldwide, with a focus on anarchist inmates, as well as prison-related information about Austria, such as repression, construction of new facilities or protests. By its own definition, it wants to „empower the consciousness of regional and international fights against the prison society“ (Bruchstellen, 2014). "Bruchstellen" is not a classic prison newspaper as it is not written by inmates, but it lies its focal point on prison news. The paper still exists.

One paper that remains until today is the "Blickpunkte" (engl: Points of view). However, the "Blickpunkte" does not work as an inmate-production written in prison anymore, as consequence of the aforementioned decree in 2016. It is now run by the so-called "Selbst- und Interessensvertretung zum Maßnahmenvollzug" (SiM), an advocist group for inmates in the Austrian "Maßnahmenvollzug". The term "Maßnahmenvollzug" describes incarceration of people who occur to have lacking criminal liability. This includes, according to Austrian law, dangerous subsequent offenders, criminal offenders in need of withdrawal as well as mentally abnormal criminal offenders (Strafgesetzbuch, 2019). I continue to further use the German term of "Maßnahmenvollzug", as there does not seem to exist a similar term in English. Maßnahmenvollzug is a useful example of illogical laws in Austria, as an imprisoned person can in this case only be released if a prison psychiatrist attests that the person does not pose any danger to the public anymore. In case of the released person committing another crime after getting out, the prison psychiatrist stands to be responsible. This is why many inmates committed according to Maßnahmenvollzug stay imprisoned for years after having served their sentence.

"Blickpunkte" is a continuation of the "Mittersteig-News", which exists for twenty years and was published in the penal facility Mittersteig. "Mittersteig-News" was cancelled in 2005, when it published a special issue after the death of an author and Mittersteig-inmate, disclosing multiple of his texts. The author was incarcerated for multiple sexual offences and, according

to the head of the institution, acted out his sexual fantasies in his publications (Luef, 2007). “Blickpunkte“ will be explained further in the introduction of interviewed media.

3.2.5 Prison Unions as Mean for Communication of Malfunctions and Urge for a Change

The “Blickpunkte“ and the SiM open the room for discussion of another phenomenon which evolved over the last years regarding prison journalism. It is the founding of prisoners unions, following the concept of workers unions. In Germany, the previously mentioned GG/BO was founded in 2014 in the prison institution JVA Tegel. Their aim was to constitute a state-wide prisoners union with branches in every German federal state. As a chance to communicate its goals and as well to give prisoners a platform to voice their concerns and claims, they initiated the prisoners-union-paper “Outbreak“. The GG/BO has not only raised a high amount of worldwide media attention to their project, but has also spread to many federal states over the last years.

Meanwhile in Austria, the already mentioned SiM was founded in 2016, as an advocist group for the interests of inmates of Mittersteig, the Austrian previously explained Austrian Maßnahmenvollzug. Apart from SiM, attempts have been made since 2015 to create a state-wide prisoners union called GG/BO R.A.U.S. However, the Austrian Ministry of Justice has listed multiple reasons why such an organisation cannot be legally founded in Austria.

4. Breaking through the Bars

This chapter dawn with an introduction of the interview partners, to enable a deeper understanding of the structures the interviewees are working in. After having achieved that, the introduction is followed by a thematic analysis of the interviews. Through the analysis, the output of the interviews gets structured into different topics, which are used to answer the primary posed research questions later on. Various topics, such as similarities, structural issues or country comparisons are introduced for the sake of making a detailed analysis possible.

4.1 Introduction of the Interviewed Media

For the reasons mentioned in the previous sections, the now discussed journalism projects seem to be rather more important. In the following paragraphs, I further explain the background and content of media covered in this case study.

4.1.1 Der Lichtblick

The “Der Lichtblick“ is the oldest still existing German Prison Newspaper. Founded in 1968 in the penal institution Berlin Tegel, it prides itself to be the country’s only independent prison newspaper. Whether this argument is valid, stands to question. The paper is mainly conducted by four editors, which will be further discussed in the analysis. One issue is about 60 pages long and the covers mostly show caricatural drawings. The layout is, in comparison to previously mentioned prison papers, quite professional. Articles are on average two pages long and the index page includes a big red notification about the next deadline, in case someone wants to contribute. Furthermore, the amount of advertisements in the paper demands attention. On nearly every second page one can find prison-related adverts such as adverts for assisted living, consulting agencies and many law firms.

Articles in the paper include essays (such as about stolen time), readers’ letters, guest commentaries, criticisms about the prison system (like locking people up for not being able to pay monetary fines), texts about difficulties in prisoners’ lives while doing time and afterwards (like trying to regain a driver’s license, working in prisons or sexuality behind bars), short-form pieces about Tegel-internal news, literature reviews, cultural reviews (for example about the prison play including pictures), discussions about better penal systems (such as open imprisonment) and service pages (list of important phone numbers of the German penal

system, contact information for responsible counselling centres, explanation of juridical terms and general contact advertisements) (Kieper, 2019).

An interesting aspect about the Lichtblick is, that one of the latest issues also contains an interview with a German senator of Justice (Kieper, 2019), which would probably out of a conflict of interest not be done by most prisoners papers, as they are supposed to voice ideas and opinions of people that would normally not be heard. Other than that, this also speaks for the acceptance of the paper as a valid medium by the German political sphere. Another unusual facet of “Der Lichtblick“ is, how it always features two pages of sexual pictures in the middle of the paper – one male, one female (Kieper, 2019).

From the looks of it, the paper seems like a pretty critical prison newspaper, including editorial introductions such as “As affected individuals, we view every announcement of change sceptically, as the past has taught us that change primarily signifies the worsening of the situation for the imprisoned“ (Kieper, 2019). Those critical views are reflected in the paper through various criticisms of the jurisdictional system and the uncovering of disparities.

4.1.2 Outbreak

The official newspaper of the GG/BO is available since 2014 as an online medium or otherwise in print, free of charge for inmates or for a price of two Euros for everybody else. It gets sent to nearly all German prisons. The name “Outbreak“ is described to derive from the core topics of breaking social isolation of inmates, creating an uncensored space of expression and spreading the prisoners union to all German states (Rast, 2014). The prisoners union describes its paper as “a platform for information about the prisoners union as well as a forum for inmates who want to make union-freedom possible in German prisons“ (Rast, 2014). The newspaper is therefore a mixture of a prisoners and union paper, and wants to serve as connection of union work behind and outside of prison bars, with the goal of turning solidarity between prisoners into practice (Rast, 2014). The project is done by inmates as well as solidaric outsiders (Rast, 2014).). The main objectives of the union as well as its paper are a minimum wage, social security as well as freedom of union work for prisoners (Rast, 2014). Prisoners do not classify as standard workers, even though they are obligated to work while doing time. This obligation is argued to be a more humane way of treatment, to give prisoners distraction and keep them more integrated into a social normative way of living. This is also indicated to be the reason for wages being way below the minimum income and many social standards not being part of the

working “agreement“. One of the basic social security measures that normally go hand in hand with a working contract are pension funds. This however does not apply to German (or likewise Austrian) prisoners, which leads to a high risk of elderly poverty after spending time in prison, besides other risks.

The GG/BO has set up some ground rules for their annual issues. The paper is supposed to act, operate and influence inside as well as outside of prison walls. Moreover, the idea is to put an emphasis on easily understandable writing, to keep barriers low (which does not always shine through). For the same reason, and because imprisonment is an international issue, not only German, but also articles in international languages are supposed to be published in the medium. This poses a question about German prisons being more liberal than Austrian ones in some aspects, as in many Austrian prisons media in languages other than German are often forbidden. This is reasoned with not being able to control the read content and therefore not being able to decide whether the medium contains dangerous arguments. Because of this rule, it is sometimes difficult for non-Austrian or non-German inmates in Austrian prison facilities to gain information or general reading material in a legal way.

Contentwise, the “Outbreak“ includes union-related bureaucratic issues, such as the Union’s founding declaration, as well as articles about the Unions’ core issues such as minimum wage and pension funds on an average of 50 pages (Rast, 2014). It also covers reports about means of repression against imprisoned unionists and, interestingly enough, a long article about a quarrel with “Der Lichtblick“, describing it as not being as independent as it acts to be. “Outbreak“ also covers, just like announced, Turkish and English texts. Apart from that it releases many texts which were already published elsewhere, such as press releases by groups and movements expressing their solidarity for the union, just as references in mainstream media. The founding of the first prisoners union not only got covered by German leftist media, but also worldwide by newspapers such as Milli Gazete or TheGuardian (Rast, 2014). For this topic, the coverage appears to be a media uproar, as similar topics often get ignored by mainstream media. This however seems to have sparked some interest. And not only in the prison media sphere, as it appears.

There is a remarkable difference between the first issue in 2014 and the third issue in 2017/2018, as a major (and at that point also utopian) aim during conducting the paper in 2014 was to expand the union from Berlin-Tegel to the whole nation. As the third newspaper is being

issued, solidarity groups have been established in many states. They not only cover their own states but also the ones which do not have their own unionist group yet (Bras dos Santos 2017). For this reason, the third issue includes many press releases and articles written by solidarity groups about unjust ongoing in different German prisons (though a notable amount stems from the solidarity group of Berlin) (Bras dos Santos, 2017). Furthermore, the issue includes critical comics, a book discussion about a novel that is free of charge for inmates and two longer articles about various downsides of imprisonment and the prison system in connection to the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), the German radical right party (Bras dos Santos, 2017). Another change has been made through the use of non-binary language. Of all the prison-papers I read, the “Outbreak“ is only the second to do that. After Schloss und Riegel, which was, as previously mentioned, an Austrian prison newspaper focused on women’s issues in the prison society.

4.1.3 Blickpunkte

The Austrian “Blickpunkte“ was originally founded 20 years ago in the prison facility Mittersteig as newspaper being solely written by inmates (and mostly read by inmates as well). Despite being honoured with the “Claus-Gatterer-prize“ for socially engaged journalism, the prison paper became illegal in 2016 after the previously mentioned decree by the Austrian Ministry of Justice. For this reason, it was taken over by the SiM, back then consisting of three people. Today, the paper gets published multiple times a year and is available online since 2018. It wants to “shed a light as well as comment on- and create understanding of the sociopolitical situation of Austrian inmates“ (Drechsler, 2019). In the paper, journalists, legal experts and inmates get to voice their opinion. At the moment the core paper is written by 20 people and gets distributed to members of the SiM as well as to subscribers.

The covered topics include critical essays about the prison system, updates on amendments, descriptions of cases that have lately happened in prison (especially in Mittersteig), announcements of topic-related events as well as updates on SiM-activities (Drechsler, 2019). Texts surround national as well as international, up-to date and historical analyses. Articles and columns seem to be divided by topics beneath the regular writers of “Blickpunkte“. On top of that, the paper features letters sent from prisoners (Drechsler, 2019).

Evidently, the paper recently covers interviews and articles with politicians of the Austrian party “Das neue österreichische und liberale Forum“ (Neos), a neoliberal party, which leads to

the suspicion that there might exist some form of co-operation. The paper's editor, however, brings up different reasons for this situation, as will be seen later.

4.1.4 Classic journalism

As this section is dealt with through an interview with a single person and not an institution, the description stays short. Christoph Mackinger has been writing about the jurisdictional system for almost a decade. His articles have been published in Austria in weekly and monthly magazines such as "Augustin" and "Datum" as well as in the daily newspaper "Wiener Zeitung". In Germany, his texts have been taken up by the "taz" and "junge welt", besides others. The articles cover a range of prison-related topics, such as prison labour, imprisoned refugees, interviews with critical experts and social media behind bars.

4.2 Analysis of the Interviews

During the analysis of the interviews, some reoccurring topics became apparent. The following paragraphs are structured according to these units, to enable a comprehensive comparison of the different interviews.

4.2.1 Reasons and Aims for taking part in Prison Journalism projects

The main reason for the foundation of prison journalism projects lies in creating transparency about ongoing things inside prison institutions. As the journalist Mackinger says: "In my opinion, the perspective of inmates does not occur in journalism, instead they get demonized and I hope to contribute a bit to changing this" (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). The others formulate the same thought in different ways, such as Drechsler from the "Blickpunkte" talking about "getting the Maßnahmenvollzug closer to the people" (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020) or Matzke from the "Outbreak" saying it is important "to show, how the system really looks like" (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). Their analysis about the state of journalism circling the topic of prison institutions is therefore pretty much in line with scientists research put forward in the introduction, such as Mason's work from 2006.

The most obvious aims of "Outbreak", as the medium of the prisoners union, are of course minimum income, pension and absolute freedom of union work behind bars (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). The staff of the "Lichtblick" furthermore expresses another important aim: "being a paper from prisoners for prisoners" (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). This kind of clashes with the reason for which the

“Lichtblick“ was originally founded, as the go-ahead was given by the head of the JVA Tegel back-then, who apparently did not trust his employees and wanted to create another means to information about the situation in his prison. However, since then 50 years have passed, so a remaining connection to the reasoning back then is highly questionable.

Drechsler from the “Blickpunkte“ emphasizes how it is especially important to include those on the outside, who normally do not have anything to do with the topic. But as communication from the inside to the outside is difficult at the moment, which will be further explained later, the “Blickpunkte“ now focus on informing people inside prisons (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). This is rather essential for the “Blickpunkte“ since for some prisoners in the Austrian Maßnahmenvollzug, this paper is the only chance to get informed about the situation in the outside world.

The ultimate goal of creating this transparency is humanizing prisoners and creating an understanding of their situation: “We have to get to a stage at which both sides can look each other in the eye, so that inmates are able to reintegrate into society“ (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020).

4.2.2 Similarities

Pride regarding the work

One point which all my different interview partners seem to have in common is a certain kind of pride in their work. This comes especially to the fore when interviewees compare the past and the present: “When we started our work, they made fun of us. And now there are states in which prison institutions check us out every day, what is the GG/BO doing, what is happening online, are there any new accounts“ (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). It also becomes apparent, in the case of prison newspapers, when they compare themselves to similar projects: “In other states, our work is not possible. Which is why the coverage there is happening as institution-conforming as it is. Court circular.“ (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Or in hindsight of the “Blickpunkte“: “For some, it was a project of engagement, for us, the focal points were information and professionalism“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). This analysis matches with the description of the prison newspaper landscape, mentioned in the introduction, as it was described to mostly rely on penal authorities to survive and therefor mostly echo institutions (Novek, 2005; Novek 2005). Interestingly enough, the spokesperson of the JVA Tegel expresses a lot of pride in their unique project as well.

A critical view of the prison system in general

Another common aspect is the critical view of the prison system. This becomes obvious on multiple occasions during the interviews. The criticism starts with pointing out ongoing issues behind bars, such as high telephone bills, a system which promotes monopolists, the way (foreign) inmates are treated, inefficient medical care, issues with translation for foreign inmates (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020) or lacking group activities and closed gyms due to lacking employees as well as organisational skills and interest (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Those points get then expressed in a general critique mostly focusing on the area of expertise the interviewees specialised in: “Maßnahmenvollzug leads to more and more people getting behind bars, and less and less getting out of there and in the end, everything will burst at the seams“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020) Furthermore, they get put into requests for change: “I expect so much more from a state that calls itself a social state, and I know that it is possible“ (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). The critique ends, to some extent, with a call for the abolishment of the prison system in its prevalent form: “At this moment, 9000 people are behind bars in Austria and I think that there are renowned people in the justice system who are saying that the whole system does not make any sense and people will not change for the better, the longer they stay in prison and it often worsens their issues“ (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

Another aspect which all the interviewees have in common is that all of them are or have in the past been incarcerated, no matter if they are working at a prison newspaper, doing union- or NGO-work or are professional journalists. Which leads to the assumption, that primarily the affected themselves develop an interest in prison topics.

4.2.3 Problems and Need for Change

Censorship

Different varieties of censorship play and have played a role in every form of prison journalism. First of all, there are occurrences of censorship in the past of the various projects. Such as the prison-unions paper “Outbreak“ being delivered to various German prisons, but simply not handed out by the staff to the inmates. But the GG/BO dealt with this dispute by supporting affected inmates with issuing complaints to the responsible courts and, thereby, changing the situation (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020).

Moreover, journalists face issues with unwritten rules by the state, at least in Austria. As Mackinger recalls, directly interviewing prisoners is nearly impossible: “I tried a couple of

times, you always end up at the press office of the ministry of justice and they then tell you that it is not possible to interview inmates“ (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). To evade these restrictions leads to other, mainly legal and responsibility issues.

The staff of the “Lichtblick“ deals first and foremost with implicit censorship, which becomes apparent when it comes to choosing new staff members. This is where the head of the prison institution is allowed to veto people. It has happened in the past, that a member of Hell's Angels was not allowed to work at the newspaper, because “they were scared people might think the Lichtblick is being taken over by the Hell's Angels“ (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Nevertheless, the staff of the “Lichtblick“ insists, the head of the prison has limited influence as it has to have good reasons for not accepting a new writer (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Furthermore, the prison institution tried to censor the staff in the past, by moving the “Lichtblick“'s office into another cell, due to reconstruction work. Prior to that, the prison paper had its own printer in the office, which served to print all the issues. In the new cell, it was argued, was no space for the printer, so the staff had to print using the machine of the prison. From this moment on, issues got delayed or laid off, so that in the end the staff decided to find a cheaper offer from an external printshop, where until this day the issues get printed (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019).

Moreover, the staff of the “Blickpunkte“, as writers of a prison centred newspaper managed from the outside, has to deal with censorship inside the penitentiary, which affects their work likewise. This becomes visible when inmates try to hand on information about the situation inside: “(...) but many articles get censored before they leave the prison. This makes it difficult to gain any information at all. Articles do not get sent out. We get to know about this because our team visits many inmates. On these occasions, inmates tell us that they have sent us articles and ask us why they have not been published yet. And then we have to tell them that their articles never arrived at our office“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). Trying to avoid this situation by doing phone interviews is difficult as well since phone calls get monitored and are very costly for inmates (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020).

In addition, there is a type of self-censorship. This occurs within a prison newspaper, as certain topics do not get published if they would make life behind the bars harder for the inmates or concern only one person. Otherwise, the “Lichtblick“ staff would see itself as denunciators (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Other cases are the ones in

which journalistic standards, such as verification, can not be established, or to protect people who might have given away information which could affect themselves in a negative way afterwards (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). The “Blickpunkte“ also does not publish articles about suicide in prison, for privacy reasons (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1). This stands in opposition to the “Outbreak“, which finds suicide-reporting important, as a way of informing the public about the real situation inside: “(...) when we stay silent about such a topic, it feels as if I would back it up“ (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020).

Other problematics

Apart from censorship, some other issues occur in prison journalism. A common obstacle is proving a story through multiple unrelated sources, as sources are hard to reach and the field is rather small (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). This becomes especially difficult with regards to the Maßnahmenvollzug: “(...) the hard facts are that there are people in Maßnahmenvollzug who actually are psychologically ill and sometimes live, write or talk about stuff that did not happen this way but happens in their own world“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). In situations in which received information is questionable, getting to know the truth is hard, as access to information stays highly restricted.

In relation to this, research itself becomes an unusual complication in this field. The staff of the “Lichtblick“ conducts its research mainly over phone calls and E-mails to solidarity groups outside of prison. Some form of limited internet access has been offered to them, however, the vague phrasing of this offer brought up concerns of their search history being screened by authorities, in case of acceptance (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019).

From the outside, protagonists inside the prison are often hard to reach or stay in contact with: “You stay in contact over letters for months, then the inmate gets transferred and you do not hear anything for half a year. That is somehow frustrating“ (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Especially in mainstream journalism, timing plays a role, as special access needs to be created and research can not be done quickly via phone or E-Mail.

Additionally, a reoccurring matter seems to be attracting reliable staff members. As work is voluntary with the “Blickpunkte“, they have a high staff fluctuation. On top of that, it remains difficult to convince people from the inside to contribute, as for them it often seems as if the

work would not matter at the end (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). And the team of the “Lichtblick“ does not find writers who meet their criteria, which becomes urgent as some of them are getting released soon (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019).

The fact that questions in this area are never welcomed and attempts of intimidation are reoccurring, keeps being a problem. It is a relevant issue for the team of the “Lichtblick“, as the focus from both sides, prisoners and guards, lies on it: “When a new social media project occurs in the prison, the first suspicion is always our office and we get searched. On the other hand, prisoners see us as "bros" of the head of the institution. We also get discriminated against by our chief of enforcement.“ (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019).

Need for change

When it comes to specific wishes for the future, one aspect is prevalent: the urge to be taken more serious by authorities (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). If the publication of injustice is taken seriously and as a result this injustice is dealt with, inmates might feel as if contributing to those journalistic projects could lead to change. This is why some hope, that being taken seriously might alter the willingness of inmates to contribute to journalistic projects. The situation now in Austria seems to be the opposite: “People do not think that it matters if they contribute. They say, when I write something, it will not be published or just get lost somewhere. Or, worst case, it might get used against me, because it does not make its way to the post office but instead into my personal files“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). For the “Blickpunkte“, in an ideal world, the alteration of the situation would lead to developing branches of their medium in every prison institution, so that information could be fact-checked from the inside. Apart from that, they wish for more readers and more subscriptions, so that the paper can at some point pay itself off (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). Anyhow, the realistic present is far from that. The “Lichtblick“-journalists want to change especially their research-issues with unlimited access to the internet. On top of that, they wish for a higher employment level inside, as they have witnessed it going down over the last years. This decline has become visible to them through the way staff treats the prisoners, especially foreign ones (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). On a side note, the need for prison employees is already noticeable from outside the institution of JVA Tegel, where on the front walls one can read on a large poster: “Would you shake the hand of a murderer? Take a job as a prison guard!“

Additionally, from a classic journalism point of view, inmates should not be distanced from journalism anymore, likewise as interview partners as well as recipients of media, since this is what is happening at the moment in Austria (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

4.2.4 Structural issues

The legal framework

The legal situation of inmate-inclusive journalism appears to be very difficult. As already mentioned, getting permits to visit an inmate for the sake of journalistic interviews is close to impossible. Contrasting experiences are the exception: “In one case it was even possible to talk to inmates while we were shown around. And not with specifically appointed ones, but with the ones who were around at the moment“ (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). The circumstances of phone interviews are almost the same. As Mackinger explains, inmates have to get certain phone numbers authorised. There is a phone in the hall at which one has to insert a code and then only those authorised numbers can be called. Mobile phones are illegal (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Therefore, one needs, once again, the permission of the head of the institution and/or the Ministry of Justice, which as previously explained stands to be challenging. Other possibilities then include communicating over letters, which is time-consuming and can be censored, or interviewing via illegal mobile phones. This again puts the interviewees in danger, as they commit an illegal activity and might have to face the consequences in prison. Concurrently, doing illegal phone interviews puts journalistic professionalism at risk, as it becomes hard to clarify who one is actually talking to on the phone. The only option is to trust contacts who confirm each others identity, which might not seem highly reliable (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

Regarding the state inside, the decree which forbids employees of the Austrian justice system taking positions of legal responsibility in media, hence leading to prisoners not being able to conduct a newspaper without help from the outside, has already been explained. Drechsler is convinced that this decree came into place because of the “Blickpunkte“, particularly because it was the only prison paper in Austria that was published outside the institution as well: “We were very critical, got censored multiple times and tried to pressure them to let us publish“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). After the change of the legal situation, the Blickpunkte became the only remaining prison-concerned paper, as it was taken over by the SiM: “(...) all the other newspapers, because some existed in Schwarzaau, in Karlau and in Stein, have fallen“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020).

Contrastingly e in Germany, prison journalism appears to be kind of easier, at least in specific states. Especially for inmates in Berlin, as in the 70s, the state of Berlin revised its media right. Back then, it was decided that inmates of prisons have the same right to free press as everybody else. Which is why the journalists of the “Lichtblick“ can take over the role of the publisher as well and for this reason are way less restricted by censorship (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). In other German states, the role of the publisher is normally taken over by the head of the prison, so in this case, prison staff has to take responsibility for prison newspaper content, which often leads to restrictions.

Importance of solidarity groups

Solidarity groups and voluntary work play an important role in the implementation of prison journalism, except for classic journalism about prison culture. The “Blickpunkte“ is nearly entirely done by voluntary workers, the GG/BO consists of prisoners on the one side and supporters structured in solidarity groups on the other side and research is only possible for the “Lichtblick“ because of their researchers acting in solidarity outside (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Apart from doing important work, supporters also fulfill a crucial job by motivating the ones inside: “Here, we have solidarity-groups, supporters who motivate us (...)“ (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020).

Cooperation with other inmates

The relation to other inmates, not necessarily directly involved, differ. For Mackinger, it feels like people behind bars are mainly happy to see someone is interested in their story, though he mostly interviews people who approach him first (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). For the “Blickpunkte“ and the “Outbreak“, cooperation with other inmates is crucial, since they gain information, topic proposals and overall stimuli concerning the development inside (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). The “Blickpunkte“ also get remarks about what is missing in their paper, according to the incarcerated: “(...) which is why we now also include a four-page-spread of entertainment pages in the middle. Sudoku, horoscope, quizzes. To change it up, because not everybody reads an eight-pager on expert reports about the Maßnahmenvollzug. It should contain something for everybody“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). The “Lichtblick“ on the other hand, has problems with information from other inmates, as it is often hard to find proof against uncertainty: “The best

thing to do in such cases is to tell them to write a reader's letter, which we can publish. But mostly, nothing happens after that anymore“ (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). The relationship of the “Lichtblick“ staff with other inmates is more difficult than that of the other ones anyways since as mentioned, many prisoners see them as friends of the prison authorities. They also do not seem to get along well with the activists of the GG/BO, judging by the way they talk about them and which seems to be based on reciprocity. This issue has already been taken up in the description of the “Outbreak“'s content, featuring a piece about the “Lichtblick“'s working style. At the same time, the staff understands the paper's success as a prison journalism project to be due to the functioning group dynamics inside their office.

Feedback from the other side

The interviewees have had contrasting experiences with state institutions. Mackinger has found the official institutions to be “surprisingly friendly“ (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020) and cooperative, especially since he should be known for his critical point of view by now, with the exception of the authorities not being willing to give out information about critical topics. This stands in relation to Novek's previously discussed observation of journalists getting granted access to prisons if they report on harmless topics, while critical approaches get denied (Novek, 2005). Meanwhile, activists working for the “Blickpunkte“ and the “Outbreak“ have had to deal with backlashes: “We will always be criticized from inside the penal system, of course, they are not happy about what we are doing and they are trying to slow us down“ (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). Yet, there are now many prison institutions that get informed about the condition of the various prisons by the media work of the GG/BO (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). However, the “Blickpunkte“ even got sued for defamation by the Ministry of Justice, after the first issue under the lead of the SiM was published. The process was stopped immediately by the prosecutor's office, because of insufficient initial suspicion. In Drechsler's opinion, the claim had no substance: “We do not denounce people just because we feel like it, but we work fact-based“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). Having said that, other state institutions have shown their support, for example through awarding the “Blickpunkte“ with the Gatterer-prize, the prize for socially engaged journalism which has previously been mentioned.

The “Blickpunkte“ also try to cooperate with Austrian political parties, to win them over for their claims. As they put it, they are neither funded by nor do they prefer specific parties, but

try to engage with everybody. However, some parties are closer to their goals than others and will, for that reason, also be mentioned more often: “(...) the approachability itself limits the outcome“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). Meanwhile, the “Outbreak“ finds itself to have “enough political supporters“ (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). The statewide party “Die Linke“ decided during their federal party conference in 2016, to support their claims at all levels. According to “Outbreak“, this support is witnessed every day (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020).

Personal involvement

One factor that has been briefly mentioned before, is that all interviewees have been personally affected by the penal system. For Mackinger, the time he spent in prison was a reason to start writing: “I had read about the topic before, and of course it is a completely different view when you have lived through this experience yourself“ (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Drechsler from the “Blickpunkte“ was incarcerated in Maßnahmenvollzug. He highlights how people get mostly involved with the topic when they themselves are affected, if one's relatives is involved or one stumbles over it because of one's occupation: “Nobody reading about somebody being brought to an institution for mentally abnormal criminals (by the way, a very nice way of expressing the situation) thinks: now I want to inform myself about what is going on behind bars“ (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). The interviewees from the “Lichtblick“ and the “Outbreak“ are currently spending long-term sentences in different prisons in Germany. It stands to question, to what extent the degree of personal involvement relates to solidarity groups as well.

Finances

Donations are crucial for the “Blickpunkte“, “Outbreak“ and “Lichtblick“. While the “Blickpunkte“ and the “Outbreak“ try to cover their costs by applying for funding as well, the “Lichtblick“ gets the paper's printing costs covered by the prison institution. Their work counts as prison labour, so they get paid according to wage level 5, which is the maximum rate one can get. Other expenses get then covered by donations (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). This, however, creates different issues, as financial autonomy is a crucial aspect when it comes to guaranteeing independence, as mentioned in the introduction (Janusz, 1992). When it comes to classic journalism, the monetary situation is hard to establish, as on the one hand research is more exhausting and time-consuming as in other fields, but at the same time, prison topics sell well (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

4.2.5 Comparing Austria and Germany

The interviews, as described in the previous pages, make it seem as if the general situation of prison journalism is better in Germany than in Austria. This goes most notably for the legal and financial situation as well as censorship issues of prison newspapers (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Still, one has to note, the state in Germany is likewise far from being perfect as well. Especially taking into account that even the prison newspaper in Germany, which was chosen as a way of best practice, struggles with many difficulties.

The same comparative state of Germany and Austria goes for classic journalism, according to Mackinger. General coverage is better in Germany, as the media scene is much wider and a lot more differentiated than the Austrian (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). For the same reason, selling articles on the topic is more facile in Germany: "(...) it is easier to write about this topic in Germany because there are about ten newspapers I can offer the article to. In Austria, there are three" (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Since as previously seen coverage leads to interest and interest leads to action for change, the lacking journalistic infrastructure, as well as legal and financial support in Austria, seems logical.

4.2.6 Success

Prison journalism projects have made different achievements. One of them is a noticeable growth of public knowledge about occurrences behind the bars. After going public, the "Blickpunkte" started to realize how an audience interested in the ongoing inside prisons arose. This is estimated to have happened primarily because of prison scandals the "Blickpunkte" have informed about (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020). The Outbreak and the GG/BO had their share of impact in many public prison discussions and unfortunate events going public, such as leaked warrants (M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). Furthermore, there are specific small victories, such as the "Lichtblick"-staff list: "We got the Christmas parcels back, the yard became larger, there is hot food again in the isolation ward and prices of phone calls by the company Telio have been lowered in Tegel" (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). To focus on one achievement, as phone costs are a never-ending discussion in prison, them being lowered exclusively in JVA Tegel shows the influence of the prison newspaper. Other small or large accomplishments have been mentioned before.

4.3 Answering the Research Questions

As shown in this paper, multiple journalistic approaches to break through prison walls and give prison inmates a voice exist. In Central Europe, there are prison newspapers, journalists focusing on the jurisdictional system as well as prison unions working toward this goal of making a peace-journalistic prison media sphere possible.

4.3.1 Inclusion of Minorities

As shown in Table 1, minorities get included in multiple ways through different approaches. The aim of the journalistic projects itself mostly lies in creating a society which is more focused on inmates' perspective and thereby raising public awareness of a more realistic illustration of the prison situation and its defaults (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). This became apparent during talking to the interview partners about their reasons for taking part in these different approaches. However, having a goal does not guarantee it will be reached as well. Mackinger, the "Blickpunkte" and the "Outbreak" seem to try to get as close to this ideal as possible since naturally, they are dependant on prisoner's information for their papers' content (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). The need for working together with incarcerated people is obvious in view of the many structural issues those projects are facing. In relation to that, the "Blickpunkte" as a way of example appears to struggle when it comes to directly include inmates as writers of their own story, which will be elaborated in the next paragraph. Furthermore, as one can see with the example of "Lichtblick", these journalistic projects might as well create mechanisms of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion behind the bars (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Apart from that, "Outbreak" and "Blickpunkte" seem to have achieved their goals of raising more public awareness of prison minorities issues in multiple ways. The "Blickpunkte" report about a rising interested audience, while the "Outbreak" and the GG/BO are by now part of most discussions around the jurisdictional system, either as critics or informers (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). The "Lichtblick", on the other hand, plays a role inside prison, raising a voice for the incarcerated and thereby achieving improvements step by step, such as the enlargement of the yard or lowered phone costs (Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019).

Table 1

Inclusion of minorities

Inclusion of minorities	Lichtblick	Blickpunkte	Outbreak	Mainstream journalism
Reasons and aims for taking part in prison journalism projects	Reasons: „In the beginning, the head of the institution did not get informed by his officers, so he wanted to know what was actually going on inside his prison.“	Reasons: “I took the Blickpunkte over with the SiM, because it would be a pity if the project ceased to exist.“	Reasons: “We have our main issues: minimum income, pension and absolute freedom of union work behind bars.“	Reasons: “In my opinion, the perspective of inmates does not occur in journalism, instead they get demonized (...)“
	Aims: “We have the aspiration of being a paper from prisoners for prisoners.“ „We want to enable transparency.“ „(...) to be heard and to enable change.“	Aims: “The goal is getting the Maßnahmenvollzug closer to the people, even those on the outside who do not have anything to do with it.“ “(...) because it is the only magazine which informs the incarcerated about ongoings outside.“	Aims: “It is important to show, how the system really looks like, saying look at it.“ “We have to get to a stage at which both sides can look each other in the eye, so that inmates are able to reintegrate into society.“	Aims: “(...) and I hope to contribute a bit to changing this.“
Cooperation with inmates	„When other inmates give us hints, we need protection against uncertainty. The best thing to do is to tell them, that they are right and should write a reader’s letter for us. Mostly, nothing happens anymore after that.“ “ (...) prisoners see us as "bros" of the head of the institution.“	“On the one hand, we choose our topics through the mails of the incarcerated (...)“ „(...) our team works at the focal point and many people get visited by us. Then, somebody tells us he wrote an article and wants to know at what point it gets released. Then we have to tell him it never arrived.“ „[The paper] (...) should include something for everybody.“	„Naturally, one needs the people inside, they are the driving force.“ „There are situations we only get to know about, because inmates tell us about them.“	“I felt like everybody was happy, if journalists showed interest in their stories. But I have to admit, my contacts into prison were always people who approached me by themselves. I have seldomly been to a prison and randomly talked to people and asked them questions. One thing which has happened was, that I created a contact with the help of a social worker and people then denied my request.“

Rising public awareness for minorities' issues		“We realized, a public that is interested in the ongoings inside exists. Through scandals which have happened we've won many readers who do not have anything to do with the theme.“	“A leaked warrant in Dresden, because of Chemnitz, where does it come from? From the GG/BO. Beate Zschäpe gets courted in Saxony, we have to question that.“	
Changes for minorities inside prisons	“We have accomplished changes in the past, such as christmas parcels being allowed to be received again, the enlargement of the yard, warm food in the isolation ward, lowered costs of Telio [Phone company] in Tegel“			

4.3.2 Difficulties of various Approaches

As already mentioned, while conducting a prison paper, organising a prisoners union or focusing journalistically on the penal system, many difficulties occur, as demonstrated in Table 2. The most obvious one is censorship, which has been shown to have multiple variations. From past issues that had to be overcome and dealt with, such as papers not being delivered or projects being sued, state restrictions regarding access to prisoners, restrictions while choosing co-workers inside prison institutions, inmates not being allowed to contribute, all the way to self-censorship because of journalistic standards or measures of protection (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019; C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). While most forms of censorship depend on employees of the prison institution or the legal situation, self-censorship depends on the personal moral code of the interviewees. Furthermore, additional issues which have to be faced include problems with examining information, conducting research, convincing further inmates of the importance of the project and getting discriminated against for the critical work (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019; C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020).

Table 2

Difficulties of various Approaches

Difficulties of various approaches	Lichtblick	Blickpunkte	Outbreak	Mainstream Journalism
Censorship	<p>“The prison has to have good reasons for denying somebody a position with the Lichtblick. But there was the case of a Hell’s Angels guy. They [prison administration] were scared him working with us would give the impression of the paper being taken over by the Hell’s Angels. So he was not allowed to join.“</p> <p>“Originally, the paper got printed in our own office. 2014, we got moved to another part of the prison. Suddenly, there was no space for a printer anymore. Then we had to print our paper at the official prison printer, which lead to issues being delayed or not being released. They said the costs were to high.“</p>	<p>„We do not publish things, which are not grounded on journalistic ethics.“</p> <p>„One thing we do not do, is reporting suicide.“</p> <p>“(…) many articles get censored before they leave the prison. This makes it difficult to gain any information at all. Articles do not get send out.“</p> <p>“They sued me. Right after taking over the first issue we got sued for defamation. But that got stopped imidiatly by the prosecutor's office, because of insufficient initial suspicion. I found it worrisome, how the ministry of justice is not able to develop working legal action. But of course, it did not have any substance.“</p>	<p>“I do not recall topics we do not write about. (...) Only by reporting about it [suicide], the public gets to know how it really is in there [prison]. How it feels to spend the whole life from beginning to end there. Nobody can relate to the awfulness in there, how humans get broken. This [creating an understanding] only works when I create publicity. And when we stay silent about such a topic, it feels as if I would back it up.“</p>	<p>“One can not interview people who are imprisoned, that is not allowed. I tried a couple of times, you always end up at the press office of the ministry of justice and they then tell you that it is not possible to interview inmates.“</p> <p>“In Austria, incarcerated have to get certain phone numbers approved. (...) This means, one can not quickly call somebody on their mobile.“</p> <p>“I have given up interview partners because they were only saying racist stuff all the time.“</p> <p>“And for the protection of informants (...) like when they tell me, where they get their information or their mobile phone from.“</p>
Research	<p>“Our research mostly happens via phone calls or E-Mails to outsiders.“</p> <p>„We do not have unlimited access to the internet.“</p>	<p>“(…) the hard facts are there are people in Maßnahmenvollzug who actually are psychologically ill and sometimes live, write or talk about stuff that did not happen this way but happened in their own world.“</p>		<p>“One can not simply write an e-mail (...).“</p> <p>“You stay in contact over letters for months, then the inmate gets transferred and you do not hear anything for half a year. That is somehow frustrating“</p>

				“I had problems in the past, when an incarcerated person has told me about a scandal and I started to do my research, and prior publishing I realized this does not add up.“
Staff	“We desperately need new editors. Some of us only have two years left in prison, some even less. But the good ones all already have their jobs.“	“We have high fluctuation in the office. We have to get used to new editors all the time.“ “ (...) they say what I am doing does not make sense. If I write something, it will not get published. (...) it might get used against somebody, because it does not get send via post but ends up in somebody’s file“		

4.3.3 Austria and Germany in Comparison

It is becoming evident, how all approaches to include prison perspectives in journalistic outputs are dealing with a variety of issues. Nevertheless, whilst remembering that this does not mean the German jurisdictional system is welcoming critical prison journalism, the situation appears to be more difficult in Austria on multiple levels, as illustrated in Table 3. The legal framework in Austria limits the options for conducting prison newspapers to close to impossible standards. While the situation is different in Germany, depending on the state, the legalities in Berlin stand in opposition, as they are merely encouraging prison journalism. On top of that, the “Lichtblick“ is funded by its prison institution, which makes the differences even more obvious. Still, the “Lichtblick“ is an example of best practice and this situation is far from being standard in other German states. Furthermore, establishing a prisoner's union has been distinctly more successful in Germany than in Austria. The GG/BO pushes many prison topics in German mainstream media. This is again linked to the jurisdictional system, which makes the process impossible, but also with a higher amount of support groups in Germany. In addition to this, the German media sphere is undebatably wider than the Austrian one, not only in regard to quantity (which one might argue stands in relation to the size of the country) but also in regard to plurality. This plurality offers classic journalists as well as NGOs and union workers a better spectrum to report about prison industry topics.

Table 3

Austria and Germany in Comparison

Comparison of the two countries	Austria Blickpunkte	Germany Lichtblick + Outbreak
Legal framework	<p>“A decree exists by the ministry of justice, which forbids jurisdictional employees to take any responsibility according to media law. “</p> <p>“(…) all the other newspapers, because some existed in Schwarzau, in Karlau and in Stein, have fallen.“</p>	<p>“The media law in Berlin has been revised in the 70s. Since then, inmates have a right to free press and can take up the role of the publisher.“</p>
Finances	<p>“We try to finance our project through donations and subscriptions.“</p> <p>„Now we try to apply for press subsidies.“</p>	<p>“Printing the paper gets financed by the prison institution. Other expenses get paid through donations.“</p> <p>“We are working a 48 hour week. This is prison labour, which gets paid on wage level five, the maximum rate.“</p>
Support	<p>“(…) the approachability itself limits the outcome.“ [political parties]</p> <p>“Everybody who works with us, does solidarity work.“</p>	<p>“At their federal party conference, the federal party Die Linke has decided to support our claims at all levels.“</p> <p>“Here, we have solidarity-groups, supporters who motivate us (…).“</p> <p>“Research works through outsiders.“</p>
Mainstream Journalism	<p>“(…) it is easier to write about this topic in Germany because there are about ten newspapers I can offer the article to. In Austria, there are three.“</p>	

4.3.4 Making a Change

These problematics make the pressuring need for change to engage in a peace-journalistic media sphere obvious. Interviewees want and need to be taken more seriously instead of being viewed as enemies. This goes foremost for state institutions, but also for other people behind bars (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). Moreover, the approaches being taken seriously stands in relation to lifting the bars to ease communication between activists and journalists inside and outside. As has been shown and as highlighted in Table 4, there are multiple pillars which lead to success or defeat of the journalistic projects. First of all, there is the legal framework, which appears to be rather similar in Austria and Germany when it comes to classic journalism trying to conduct interviews inside, but pretty different regarding the state of prison newspapers and

union work (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019; C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). As the prison media law in Berlin shows, revisions of the legal framework for the better are possible. And as Mackinger points out in the interview, malfunctions of the system normally find their way outside the prison cells at one point anyways (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). This is now more true than ever, as the internet and social media make their way into prisons. More means of communications are evolving, so it will become harder for the penalty system to hide through its restrictions anyhow. Secondly, for prison newspapers as well as prison unions, solidarity groups play a huge role in doing important work on the one hand, but also just as a factor of motivation for the incarcerated on the other hand (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019). These groups need to be evolved even further where they already exist and established where they do not. As history has shown, solidarity movements tend to rise when malfunctions occur in public debates, so documentation is key. Thirdly, political parties can support prisoners' claims by putting them up for discussion in parliament (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). For this, political parties in parliament which have prisoners issues on their radar are needed. Lobbying politicians has in the past mostly been done by prison unions, which have not been established nationwide in Austria. So, this needs to happen. Also, changes in the system because of the issues being voiced through prison journalism, might lead to the affected believing and contributing more to those projects. Fourthly, finances are a constant struggle. The "Lichtblick" is the only project which is covered by the prison institution, which opens up other issues. While the situation of classic journalism is never a good one in present times, the "Blickpunkte" and the "Outbreak" rely first and foremost on donations, sponsorships, subscriptions and prize money (M. Drechsler, personal communication, February 1, 2020; Lichtblick staff, personal communication, December 12, 2019; C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020; M. Matzke, personal communication, March 5, 2020). As resocialisation is an important goal of the states for all of their citizens, they should be willing to spare the money to develop projects which make the improvement of the situation possible by reporting about its issues. And fifthly the media system of the concerned states plays a role as well, as the plurality of a states media sphere results in either more or fewer possibilities for covering prison topics (C. Mackinger, personal communication, February 14, 2020). But this pillar is important for the other projects as well,

since a more differentiated media sphere might raise awareness and therefore interest in topics circling the jurisdictional system. This relates furthermore to the issue of mainly somehow affected people showing interest in the incarceration system and its malfunctions, since a wholesome, critical media system might change the general impression of inmates and could have the potential of turning “inmate struggles“ into “human struggles“.

Table 4
Making a Change

Making a change	Lichtblick	Blickpunkte	Outbreak	Mainstream Journalism
Legal framework	<p>“The media law in Berlin has been revised in the 70s. Since then, inmates have a right to free press and can take up the role of the publisher.“</p> <p>“We feel like media freedom is not achieved without free internet access.“</p>	<p>“There exists a decree by the ministry of justice, which forbids jurisdictional employees to take any responsibility according to media law.“</p> <p>“(…) all the other newspapers, because some existed in Schwarzau, in Karlau and in Stein, have fallen“</p>		<p>“I believe, sealing off detainees, as it is the prevalent way in Austria, is nonsense. The ministry of justice gets spared a few scandals, but in the end those get out there anyways. Most of them have some kind of contacts, and especially longterm-detainees find ways to get information out there, past the guards.“</p>
Solidarity groups	<p>“Research works through outsiders.“</p>	<p>“Everybody who works with us, does solidarity work.“</p>	<p>“(…) on the other hand, there are the supporters of the solidarity groups.“</p> <p>“Here, we have solidarity-groups, supporters who motivate us (…)“</p>	
Political groups		<p>“Of course there are parties, which are closer to our goals than others.“</p> <p>“We always try to get in contact with everybody, but we receive a limited amount of answers.“</p> <p>“(…) the approachability itself limits the outcome“</p>	<p>“At their federal party conference, the federal party Die Linke has decided to support our claims at all levels. And this gets attested every day.“</p> <p>“I am sure there are people and parties in Austria who are willing to think and live in a social way. It is important to win those over. It is</p>	

			hard work, but in the end everybody gets helped.“	
Finances	<p>“Printing the paper gets financed by the prison institution. Other expenses get paid through donations.“</p> <p>“We are working an 48 hour week. This is prison labour, which gets paid on wage level five, the maximum rate.“</p>	<p>“We try to finance our project through donations and subscriptions.“</p> <p>„Now we try to apply for press subsidies.“</p>	“We get financed through donations, foundations, we try to make use of every possibility.“	“Asking about finances is always a bad question when it comes to journalism. This topic is more exhausting than others, which is why it might be financially worse. But it also goes down well, so I can not really say (...)“
Media system				<p>“I would say the situation is better in Germany, as the media sphere is much more diverse. In Austria, there are only a few papers which report about politics and society in a critical way.“</p> <p>“(…) it is easier to write about this topic in Germany because there are about ten newspapers I can offer the article to. In Austria, there are three“</p>

All of these proposals seem to be aiming high. It can not be stressed enough however, that these are only the first steps which would make an unbearable media situation a bit more bearable and though which the first steps towards the inclusion of the prison minority into a peace-journalistic, minority-inclusive media sphere might be done.

5. Summing up Towards an Inclusive Mediascape

My research has brought up many different approaches to create a minority-inclusive prison media sphere. I have investigated three of those extensively, through expert interviews in Austria and Germany, specifically prison newspapers, prison unions and mainstream journalism. As it turns out, they are all facing similar issues, such as multiple varieties of censorship, conducting research or discrimination (see chapters 4.4.3, 4.4.4, 4.5.2). While the situation in Germany is far from welcoming critical approaches of prison journalism, the Austrian situation seems to be worse, which becomes visible regarding the (non-)existence of prison unions or prison papers. The creation of such gets especially complicated through the legal framework, the states' media sphere, the (non-)existence of support groups and the state of financial affairs (see chapters 4.4.5, 4.5.3). It also stands in relation to scientific coverage, which is close to barely available in Germany and even less so in Austria. As the dive into the historical background of prison media has shown, the public debate on prison culture, the mediascape, the possibilities to engage in prison journalism and the strictness of authorities go hand in hand (see chapter 4.2). This means, for the sake of more prison-minority-inclusive journalism, multiple facets need to be changed. Taking this into account, I introduced several pillars to enable change. Those pillars are results of the expert interviews and I, therefore, do not claim completeness. They include the legal situation, the creation of solidarity groups, the support of political parties, the generation of financial support and the plurality of the mass media sphere (see chapter 4.5.4). As the comparison of different approaches in different states has shown, changing those aspects is not impossible.

5.1 Lacking Knowledge on the Topic of Prison Journalism

My experience conducting this thesis has confirmed previous scientific conclusions, such as previously described censorship issues (Novek, 2005; Vomberg, 2000). Additionally, while talking about my field, the majority of my surrounding turned out to have never even heard about prison newspapers or unions. The same goes for multiple malfunctions of the legal and incarceration system. This gets backed up by my interview partners as well as previous scientific research. In the former case, by their impression that only people who have some kind of personal or professional relationship with the prison system become interested in it (see chapter 4.4.4). In the latter case the argument gets picked up by, for example, Vomberg (2000), hypothesising how the lack of scientific research in the field results due to lacking knowledge of the existence of prison newspapers and fear of getting in contact with the prison-institution.

5.2 Issues faced during the Study

One aspect which introduced difficulties was the language. As interviews were held in the German-speaking area, they were done in German. Nevertheless, the thesis had to be in English. This posed an issue trying to qualitatively translate the records as close to the used colloquial terms as possible, whilst also making grammatically sense in English. Another problem turned out to be finding professional journalists who focus on correction facilities. In the German-speaking area, many mass media employ at least one journalist who concentrates on the jurisdictional system. But those are overwhelmingly court reporters, who in the rarest cases include prison reporting in their work schedule. Moreover, many journalists who wrote one or two articles about prisons can be found, but none of them focuses on the topic. The one journalist who could be found proved the case that mainly affected people become involved in the subject matter, as he had his own experience with the prison system in the past. However, the biggest struggle during my research became the lack of research papers on the topic of prison journalism. As previously mentioned, most research, at least regarding research in English, stems from the United States. But even there scientists insist on pointing out the insufficient amount of scientific work due to lacking knowledge on the existence of prison journalism and difficulties in accessing the field (Churcher, 2011; Mason, 2006; Novek, 2005; Trulson, Marquart & Mullings 2006; Valentine, 2010). Trying to put a regional frame on my dissertation worsened the issue, as there only exists a very limited amount of research papers in Germany and Austria, let alone current work (Schober, 2006; Joerger, 1971; Vollmer, 1980; Vomberg, 2000). Other than that, only radical-leftist libraries possess insights into prison newspapers. Those are often not easy to get access to, mainly because of unclear opening hours, but also general reachability and organisation. It was also unfortunate, that the anarchist library of Vienna had to close down shortly before I started my research, which normally possesses a lot of informative material on prison culture. This summary shows how deficient the amount of scientific as well as the journalistic output circling this topic has been. Future work is desperately needed.

5.3 Fields for further Research

I have touched many topics in this dissertation, which need to be further researched. Starting from prison union work, to women's role regarding prison newspapers, to social media and new media platforms in prison institutions, just to name a few. Prison union work is a subject matter which, as a phenomenon itself has only developed in the last few years, which is why close to no research on the topic exists yet. Nevertheless, as has been shown, the field offers multiple

possibilities for changing the prison (journalism) situation for the better and should, therefore, be taken up for further investigation. Furthermore, has this study only included male participants, as no female prison journalism projects exist in Austria anymore and the Lichtblick in Germany has been chosen as a way of best practice. But, as Novek (2005) has noted, prison newspapers, just as many other prison projects, get predominantly introduced in male institutions, as the fear of misbehaviour due to the lack of occupation is greater there. Additionally, women's prisons bring up more and different important issues to discuss. So, for the sake of filling this gap that was left open in my dissertation, female prison journalism should be a topic for follow-up research. New media on the other hand, just like union work, have only lately made their way into prisons. As has been mentioned multiple times during the expert interviews, new media become increasingly important for communication from the inside to the outside and vice versa. On that account, new media inside prisons will become a progressively interesting research field for social science scholars. All of the proposed subjects have a lack of existing scientific work in common, which should not be discouraging. The prison topic is a question of public interest, and the excerpt into popular culture has shown that the public is interested likewise (see chapter 4.1). Only by putting a focus on it, malfunctions can be located, recognized and prevented. This has to be done, by peace-journalistic, minority-inclusive prison journalism from both sides of the bars.

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