How do mainstream media communicate minority media?

A difference-theoretical study on Radio Islam and AYPA-TV

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Contents

Introduction: The aim of the study ................................................................. 5

1. Theoretical and methodological perspective ........................................... 9
   1.1. Communication according to Niklas Luhmann ............................... 10
   1.2. The role of topics in the media ...................................................... 14
   1.3. Method: a difference – theoretical approach ................................. 16

2. Case study: Radio Islam ........................................................................ 21
   2.1. Background .................................................................................. 21
   2.2. Communication in the newspapers .............................................. 22
       2.2.1. The beginning: The information was not selected ................ 23
       2.2.2. The construction of the person Ahmed Rami: The
               personified other ..................................................................... 26
       2.2.3. The Cultural system: reappraisal ........................................... 30
       2.2.4. Rami and his supposed defenders ....................................... 30
       2.2.5. The political system: Threat to democracy ......................... 37
       2.2.6. The education system: Rami in the schools? ....................... 40
       2.2.7. The science system: Racism and historiography ................. 44
       2.2.8. The legal system: incapable and powerless ......................... 45
       2.2.9. The media system ......................................................... 46
   2.3. Conclusions ................................................................................. 53

3. Case study: AYPA-TV .......................................................................... 55
   3.1. Background .................................................................................. 55
   3.2. The selected topics of the newspapers ......................................... 58
       3.2.1. “The smallest TV station in the world” ............................. 58
       3.2.2. “A mobile task force” ...................................................... 59
       3.2.3. Compact working and living .............................................. 63
       3.2.4. TV programme and reception .......................................... 68
       3.2.5. About Berlin cable network .............................................. 75
3.2.6. Legal proceedings against AYPA-TV ...........................................76
3.2.7. Fundamentalist tendencies in the Turkish community ..........78
3.2.8. German-Turkish life .................................................................80
3.3. Conclusion ....................................................................................82

4. A bad and a good example .................................................................85

5. References .......................................................................................89
Introduction: The aim of the study

The idea for this study has been developed in connection with the research programme “Variable Media Landscapes”, financed by the Baltic Sea Foundation. The research programme “aims at studying the significance of the media in and for social and cultural processes” (Bolin 2003). My starting point is that media landscapes are undergoing tremendous transformations, caused not only by new media technology developments but also by social and cultural challenges, due mainly to increased migration. Western European countries are being challenged by exploding migration movements due to political and economic instability in migrants’ home countries. In 2007, almost 30 percent of Sweden’s inhabitants had a migrant background (Statistiska centralbyråns 2007), and in 2006 in Germany the corresponding figure was 19 percent (Statistisches Bundesamt 2005).

What does this mean for the mass media? How are they affected by these developments? On the one hand, they are put under pressure: Politicians call on the mass media to contribute to the integration of ethnic minorities as media discourse is the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideas. But this demand does not correspond with the mass media images being presented. Research has shown that media coverage of minorities is mostly negative, that the media emphasize group polarization by focusing on problems and threats to “us”, the majority group. Furthermore, minority groups do not have a voice in the mainstream media of their host society. Alternative sources of information are scarce, with information coming from authorities or other elites of the majority culture (e.g. Presstådsvämlanden 2002: 10; Pripp 2002; Ross 2000, Merten & Ruhrmann 1986; Merten 1987, Hömberg & Schlemmer 1995).

On the other hand, we can observe that the media landscape in host countries has grown through a number of minority media productions.
State subsidies and Open Channel possibilities have helped establish a wide range of utterance possibilities. A study notes that Sweden’s various minority groups had about 120 newspapers, 250 community radio stations and 40 home pages in 2002. These are produced in Sweden, not only in their respective languages but also in Swedish (Presstödsnämnden 2002, 9). So, a huge minority media landscape has developed, but is nonetheless hardly noticed by mainstream media. This is not due to the language barrier but to the lack of interest or relevance in selecting information from this part of society: The “big ones” do not look at the “small ones”. Something special has to happen in order for mainstream media to communicate minority media.

My study aims to investigate how mainstream media refer to minority media productions in their coverage, and what has to be done for the minority media to get into the modes of operation of mainstream media. The report focuses on a perspective that studies the communicative efforts, or in other words the media coverage, of the majority culture in mainstream media reacting to media productions by alternative/minority media. It is here that encounters occur, and the study will concentrate on a qualitative analysis of Swedish media coverage of Radio Islam (1990-2005), and on German media coverage of AYPA-TV (1993-2005) from a difference-theoretical point of view. The first case is a very special one and has gone down in Swedish history: Radio Islam, a community radio station (and later a web site) was repeatedly forbidden by law due to hate speeches. The station received intense media attention in the 1990s and is still receiving some attention in the media today. The other case, the German example of AYPA-TV, is not covered by the media to the same degree; it is a relatively uncontroversial case, but meets the media’s criteria for being unusual. Unlike the AYPA communication, which is constructed as an isolated case, the topic of Radio Islam has taken on the function of a key event.

The comparison between these two cases marks the differences and simultaneously shows the similarities in their treatment by the mainstream media. These examples were chosen based on the number of articles produced; I have chosen cases that are covered by the media relatively often in order to get material to analyse. I have also chosen
coverage in two different countries to capture different social and cultural contexts of media coverage. My aim is not to analyse mainstream media’s treatment of racism, hate speech, etc., which is what the first case stands for, but to analyse what caused these two cases to be communicated by the mainstream media.

In the first part of my study I describe my theoretical approach, as Niklas Luhmann’s theory is not very well known in Sweden. The second part consists of the two case studies I analyse separately. In my conclusions I try to find answers to the question of how mainstream media refer to minority media and what is needed from the minority media’s side if they are to be communicated by the mainstream media.
1. Theoretical and methodological perspective

In my opinion, there is a theoretical perspective that helps in analysing communicative flows: The voluminous work of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998) is widely unknown outside the German-speaking world, and has been only sporadically translated to other languages. Luhmann concentrated his work on structures and functions of society, and proposed that we think in terms of systems. He distinguishes between social systems: they can be interactions, organizations, and cognitive systems (i.e., consciousness). Here, I see media organizations as social systems, and the media offers (articles, programmes, etc.) as a product of the system. The contact between and within systems

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2 A system means a totality of mutual relations or an organized complexity, which consists of various elements that relate to each other. But systems are less complex than their environments are, and this is essential. Without it, there would be nothing, only chaos in society. A system exhibits a degree of closure, of autopoiesis (self-producing or self-constructing) and is self-referential. This means that all elements in the system are produced by the system itself. The system creates its own structures, its own communicative operations and its own environment as well as boundaries: “[…] all external references used in the system must be understood as internal operations” (Luhmann 2003, 32). A social system constructs its own perception of itself and of its environment. The primary function of the system is to reduce complexity, which means eliminating uncertainty, and at the same time to construct an order for which there is no blueprint in the environment. To fulfil this function, the system needs a code (for the media system: the information/non-information distinction) that filters the environment for the system and simultaneously makes the system calculable for the environment.
consists of communication. Luhmann has a complex approach: he de-
dramatizes the term *communication* and concentrates on structures and
functions without moralizing, e.g. whether the understanding is right or
wrong, and on the other hand excludes the possibility to consider com-
munication as transmission or ritual. He neutralizes the separation of
thinking in terms of transmission or ritual by concentrating on connect-
ing communication (a communication is followed by another commu-
nication) and therefore on the entire process of communication. This
opens up for a complex viewpoint that goes beyond the relevance of a
message. A message is only a part of communication.

Luhmann’s point of departure is the phenomenological tradition that
emphasizes selectivity. Selectivity is vital for coping with the complexity
that constitutes our world. Strictly speaking, complexity enforces select-
itivity, which in turn leads to the reduction of complexity via systems.
We observe the world by drawing distinctions or making choices (which
is emphasized by, e.g., the film *The Matrix*) or selections. In everyday
life, this mostly occurs unconsciously. We select the food we want to eat,
and we select the programme we want to watch. In the scientific realm,
we have to clearly mark the distinctions we find for analyzing a phe-
nomenon. In line with these assumptions, I try to base my analysis on a
difference-theoretical way of thinking, which enables an analytical ap-
proach considering relationships, links and connections that influence
the elements of the phenomenon I am interested in. But first, some re-
marks on Luhmann’s use of the term *communication*, as it differs a great
deal from the common understanding in our field of media and com-
munication research.

1.1. Communication according to Niklas Luhmann

Also here, Luhmann speaks of selection: Communication is the union of
three selections: information (what is selected to be communicated or
what the message is about), utterance (the selection of a form of com-
munication: how is the information to be communicated?) and under-
standing (about the meaning that is generated, is the/a meaning selected,
if yes which one). It is not about a sender giving up something that the receiver then acquires. This does not apply because the sender does not give anything away in the sense that he/she loses it. Luhmann does not speak in terms of a sender and a receiver, but of “alter and ego” (*der andere und der eine*). This clearly marks that he rejects the idea of transmission, because the metaphors of having, giving and keeping – that is the entire metaphor of things – imply too much ontology. There are not things that determine something, but there is the contact/relationship with something determining the communicative process. One is tempted to imagine that the transferred information is the same for both sender and receiver. However, it sometimes looks as if this identity is determined by the quality of the information, but it is constituted in the communication process. The identity of the information must be thought of as something that can mean very different things to the sender and the receiver (Luhmann 1995, 193/194).

As mentioned above, communication is a selective process, taking place at all stages of the communication process. It starts already with the information. Information is – in line with its standard definition (cf. Shannon & Weaver 1949) – a selection from a repertoire of possibilities. In other words: It is a selection to communicate this and not other information, a selection of this form of communication and not another, and a selective understanding or misunderstanding. It is possible to not communicate this, but other information instead. It is all a question of selection, and communication is therefore characterized by the consciousness of contingency – that it is as it is but could also be otherwise. Generally, Luhmann proceeded from the impossibility of communication and proposed to examine how communication is possible at all.

Every communication is based on a clear difference between information and utterance (the form of communication: how is the information to be communicated?). One can also say that this distinction offers protection for those who receive the information. Without this distinction, the communication partner would be confronted directly with the facts as they occur in the “normal” perception. The information I receive from an unknown community radio station may not have the same relevance for me than the same information distributed by a public service
station would. Or another example: Information I read in a scientific journal based on a scientific investigation has a higher status of truth as the same information in an evening paper would. Information distributed via a community radio station or on a web site of an immigrant organization has more difficulty entering the public communication domain and stimulating connecting communication than does information discussed on Dagens Nyheter’s debate page. We also have to consider that concerning the utterance, the starting points of mediated communication are very different between mainstream and minority media. This is less due to the information itself and more due to the different position of the utterance possibilities in the media system. What can this mean for the information? If one wants to communicate information publicly but the utterance possibilities for this purpose are limited, is then the information value increased in a different type and manner? In any case, this applies to the current media climate, characterized by the pursuit of attention.

Continuing Luhmann’s communication hypothesis: Information plus utterance can get no attention (no preceding communication takes place) or can be understood (communication takes place). Here, understanding is not a psychological concept. It does not deal with a right or wrong understanding. It does not concern what a message, or the author behind the message, really means. German media scholar Siegfried J. Schmidt demanded:

We have to abandon the traditional hermeneutic assumption that understanding is a doubling of sense or meaning intended by the author. (Schmidt 1994, 500)

Also here, understanding is a construct of communication; it is defined through the communication process, not by an author:

Thus communication is present if ego holds the information to be inappropriate, does not want to comply with the wish it tells him of, or would like not to obey the norm to which it relates. That ego must distinguish between information and utterance enables him to criticize and, if necessary, to reject. This changes nothing about the fact that communication has occurred [...] Reaction is what terminates communication, and only then can one tell what has emerged as a unit. (Luhmann 1995, 154)
First or foremost, Luhmann’s definition of communication concentrates on interpersonal communication. But there is a difference regarding mediated communication. The mass media have increased communication. Communication is more incalculable because of the great number of addressees. Many utterances do not reach their addressees; they are not heard, seen or read, and therefore no communication occurs. Utterances that are indeed received are possibly quickly forgotten, and no connecting communication takes place; yet the communicative unit is finished with the act of forgetting. Schmidt developed the consequences of mediated communication:

The reflexibility of perception, attention, and interaction, which is essential to face-to-face communication, is now replaced by two other reflexive structures, namely the reflexibility of expectation and knowledge. Communicators anticipate the expectations of imagined recipients, who in turn reconstruct the expectations of the communicator regarding their own expectations. The establishment of a reflexive knowledge structure leads to a situation in which a recipient knows that the communicator knows what he or she knows. This requires, of course, commonly shared knowledge as well as additional opinions about how to manage and to interpret this knowledge. (Schmidt 1994, 501)

The central problem of being connectible in the communication process implies that communication is only understandable in socially embedded contexts. In this respect, communication processes refer to those that developed expectations and commonly shared knowledge. Because of the dependence on contexts, communication binds to concrete environments, to places, and to times. Every communicative contribution within a discourse is checked automatically whether or not it is relevant or expected.

It is only in the connecting communication that it becomes clear how the difference between information and utterance has been understood:

When one communicative action follows another, it tests whether the preceding communication was understood. However surprising the connecting communication may turn out to be, it is also used to indicate and to observe how it rests on an understanding of the preceding communication. The test can turn out negative, and then it often provides an occasion for reflexive communication about
communication. But to make this possible (or to make it unnecessary) a test of understanding must always accompany, so that some part of attention is always detached to control understanding [...]. This implies time. Only in the process of connecting can one tell whether one has been understood; but one can use one’s own experience to set up communication in such a way that one can expect to be understood. (Luhmann 1995, 143)

In the face-to-face communication one observes, how argument follows onto argument, or answer to question, story to request and so forth. In the mass mediated communication one sees how, for example, texts refer to texts: Topics are picked up and texts are quoted, parodied or commented on.

1.2. The role of topics in the media

Topics of communication ensure that the media system does not disappear and that communication can take place. Topics represent communication’s other-reference. They represent what according to the operation of the system can be of interest for the environment that means something to the public. The more that is communicated, the more is exchanged, and the better the possibility is to survive, if it is correlated to the system’s own operations/preconditions:

At the level of topics, then, other-reference and self-reference are constantly being coordinated in relation to each other within the system’s own communication. (Luhmann 2000, 12)

Topics are for structurally linking together the mass media with other fields of society. The success of mass media depends on the acceptance of their topics. They thus depend on someone buying and reading the media and giving them attention. Again, this secures the survival of the mass media system.

Not all topics are successful or possible for the mass media to cover. Luhmann distinguished between topics and functions:

An observer (and this might be organizations within the system of the mass media) can distinguish between *topics* and *functions* of communication. For exam-
ple, he can say to himself and to others: if we don’t run this or that news item, if we cancel the weather report or, say, the ‘bioscope’, we will lose our readership. (Luhmann 2000, 13)

Functions represent a sort of framework for the selection of information. With the help of the topics/functions distinction the observer wins freedom in choosing topics, particularly in eliminating them. The media can also distribute incorrect or wrong information if they only pay attention to function. There are numerous examples of this: An evening paper fakes an interview with a celebrity; a morning paper does not shrink from publishing the name of a suspect despite codes of journalism ethics. If the information corresponds to the function and does not endanger it, it is transmitted.

Topics have a concrete/factual aspect on the one hand and a temporal one on the other. Here, Luhmann distinguished between topics and contributions. Contributions refer to topics, whereas topics or themes live longer than the individual contributions do, and combine the different contributions into a long-term or short-term nexus of meaning. Some topics provoke new contributions over and over again. However, other topics are exhausted quickly.

There are also social aspects related to this problem. Luhmann postulated:

Themes also regulate who can contribute what. (Luhmann 1995, 155)

For example, topics can be used to exclude participants from the communication, at expert talks for instance. Foucault speaks in connection with his discourse theory on the diverse mechanism of excluding people from a discourse (Foucault 1996). In my opinion, some changes have occurred due to new media technologies. Furthermore, what we can still apply to face-to-face communication, looks different within mass media communication. In the age of the omnipresence of media, a democratization of topics takes place. Topics are no longer reserved for a certain group. Since the function of the mass media consists of coupling the various social functional systems (political, economic, legal, military, cultural, etc.) with each other – according to the system theory – the
mass media gain access to various topics and transform them according to their own system conditions, meaning that the topics are supposed to be understood by all. The mass media expose these topics to a larger public. In the mass medial pursuit of ever-new topics, in order to keep the attention alive, no topic seems unsuitable for journalistic treatment and the “thresholds of thematizations” become insignificant “in reference to obscenities, religious feelings and confessions, or matters over which there is generally conflict” (Luhmann 1995, 155).

Here the temporal aspect becomes significant: The thresholds of thematizations can change over time. Topics are in or out, boring or interesting, all this in different manners for different participants. The topics sometimes reach a degree of saturation and need renewal, or it can happen that contributions to the topic are not longer distributed. Therefore, topics are used for the factual and temporal, as well as social, structures of the communication process. This means that topics themselves do not define which contributions are made, in which order they occur or through whom they are distributed. Topics as well as contributions can also be refused. The respective concrete contexts or (with Luhmann) functions decide how, in which order, and which contribution appears.

Based on this theory, it is interesting to look at the mediated contributions ensuring the survival of a topic. The success of the mainstream media focused on here (and this is similar to all other mass media) “is based on making sure that topics are accepted, regardless of whether there is a positive or a negative response to information […]” (Luhmann 2000, 12). This is all about getting attention, that is at least being read, heard and seen.

1.3. Method: a difference – theoretical approach

What method can I use to analyse articles from a system theoretical approach? Luhmann regards difference-theoretical thinking as a method for acquiring knowledge. He himself considers system as a distinction between system and environment, in contrast to identity. To push the point a bit further, difference is the distinction between difference and
identity. He stresses that we can only use a term in a scientific way if we simultaneously explain what the term excludes. We know from Ferdinand de Saussure that when we use language we make use of signs, and these signs do not give us access to the real world but show us the differences one makes in the observation communicated. The word ‘minority’ is not the minority; it does not represent a minority, either. But it differs from other words such majority, immigrant, native, etc., and we can describe something differently. A term is related to a specific context and we have to make clear what the context is about. Luhmann refers to the formal logic of the mathematician George Spencer-Brown (1969), who points out that we cannot describe anything without drawing distinctions:

A distinction is drawn by arranging a boundary with separate sides so that a point on one side cannot reach the other side without crossing the boundary. (Spencer-Brown 1996, 1)

We notice one side at the expense of paying less attention to the other. This is necessary to gain knowledge about the side we are interested in. If we ascribe equal values to both sides, “knowledge of everything has become knowledge of nothing” (Spencer-Brown 1969/1997, 192). Still, a distinction does not describe a phenomenon; it describes a form of it, and it describes the relationship in which we look at it. Luhmann (and Spencer-Brown) prefer the term “form” to make clear that it is about an observation, with the observer describing the observation, and not about the thing in itself. For this, we have to explain which side we take as the starting point for the observation. A form has four aspects: the two sides, the boundary and the background or context. Thus the form is a unit that consists of a difference: a form with two different contents. The emphasis is, however, not on the question of how the two sides differ from each other, but on the fact that there is generally an inequality. Through this distinction, they are connected to each other as different parts and create as such a unit. Thus, in the widest sense, the form always includes that which it is not, that is the other side of the form. In this sense, Spencer-Brown’s term form is considerably distinct from its
other philosophy-historical use in which, for example, form is compared with matter.

To make this abstract passage more concrete and to refer to my study, I can divide my method into four steps: First, I have selected the material from the diverse databases by searching for minority media productions. The distinction I have made is: Minority media/mainstream media to get information about what was mostly communicated in the newspapers. I have decided to select the radio station Radio Islam, and the German example of the TV station AYPATV. For reaching this decision, the leading distinction between topic/contribution was crucial. Using a leading distinction enables me to reduce the complexity of a text in such a way that I can observe how the media organizations and their texts have been constructed in the mainstream media. Simultaneously, this distinction discloses my observation process and the selections I make for analyzing the media texts, because all reading of a text is based on selection. I observe only that which I am searching for. This does not sound very objective, but is the consequence of a constructive and phenomenological approach, which therefore has advantages because one is forced to uncover one’s selections and clearly show

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3 The material consists of approx. 200 newspaper articles, available in the databases Presstext and Mediatext from the period 1990-2004. All articles refer explicitly to Ahmed Rami and/or Radio Islam. Only the text part has been analysed. Most of the articles I have analysed were published in Dagens Nyheter (DN), Svenska Dagbladet (SvD), Aftonbladet (AB), Göteborgsposten (GP) and Expressen.

4 The empirical material consists of 107 newspaper articles from the period 1995-2005, collected during spring 2005. Only 44 articles refer directly to AYPATV or to its journalists Claudia Dantschke and Ali Yildirim, which I have mainly analysed. The rest are about the thematic discussion of the topics raised by AYPATV but do not mention the broadcaster. Most of the articles are from the left-liberal newspaper taz (tageszeitung). The investigation concentrates on articles published by daily newspapers from Berlin such as Berliner Zeitung (BZ), Der Tagesspiegel, Die Welt and taz. There is also one article each from Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), Frankfurter Rundschau (FR), Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) and Neues Deutschland (ND). Only the text part has been analysed. In March 2005, one interview with the editors of AYPATV was conducted in order to get more information about the TV station.

5 Each observation operates with blind spots. The distinction we apply in the act of observation cannot be observed in the very same observational process and at the same time. It only can be observed afterwards. Only the second-order observation, which observes observers, can observe the distinctions and make clear the blind spots of the observation – at the expense of another blind spot, of course.
the context of analysis. We can say that this analysis method does not deliver pure objective description, because all description is based on selection made by the researcher.

Using this topic/contribution distinction, I have looked at the connecting communication, and at the rise and fall of topics that – referring to a minority media production – provoke the most contributions and therefore the most connecting communication. I have analysed how contributions refer to other contributions. This is done mainly through topics, and I have analysed which topics are picked up in order to connect communication. This is why I have chosen the more “classic” example of Radio Islam, which received a huge number of contributions, and the present example of AYPATV, which did not receive as much attention as the former. Only texts mentioning key words such as Radio Islam and AYPATV are of interest to me. I have also searched for the personal names of the operators mentioned in connection with the media productions in order to expand the text material. In summary, I have excluded everything that does not refer to the media production of these media organizations. I have also concentrated my selection to minority media produced in the two cities of Stockholm and Berlin.

The next step was to read all media texts according to my leading distinction of topic/distribution in order to mark the various topics, first in relation to the amount of contribution. According to Luhmann, communication is seen as a selection process, and in the connecting communication we can see how information and utterance have been understood. We can say something about how texts refer to texts, how media (in my case the mainstream media) select and communicate topics.

The third step concentrates on the various topics and how they are treated in order to be successfully communicated. Again, ‘successfully communicate’ means to succeed in carrying out connecting communication. At this point, the topics are analysed in relation to their function (see previous section) in the media system as far as possible.

I have analysed the cases separately, and in the fourth step I have compared the two examples with each other regarding the similarities/differences distinction, according to how media communicate the respective topics.
2. Case study: Radio Islam

2.1. Background

In 1973 Ahmed Rami, Chief Editor of Radio Islam, came to Sweden as a refugee from Morocco. According to him, he had been condemned to death by the Moroccan military court after a failed coup d'état in 1972; he received political asylum in Sweden. He has always described himself as a fighter for freedom and democracy, as well as an activist for the rights of the Palestinian nation and as a fighter against racism. In 1987 Radio Islam began to broadcast community radio programmes in the Stockholm area. On November 14 1989 Rami was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment for anti-Semitic defamation and his broadcast license was revoked. The Swedish court declared that Radio Islam’s programme strongly resembled the anti-Semitic propaganda of the Third Reich. Radio Islam itself emphatically claimed that the broadcaster was anti-Zionistic, represented the Palestinian cause and had no anti-Semitic standpoint. Rami is quoted in DN:

‘We have tried to raise the issue of antiracist ideals. I have never advocated violence, only criticized Zionists and the Jewish state’.6 (DN 921004)

Off the air from 1993 to 1995, the programme returned in 1996, the same year Rami established the Radio Islam web site, which became a source for Holocaust deniers and anti-Semitic material. He was again convicted and fined by the court in October 2000. Today, Radio Islam exists as a web site only. Several investigations have been conducted in France and Sweden for hate crimes on the web site, but prosecutors were

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6 “Vi har försökt ta upp antirasistiska ideal. Jag har aldrig pläderat för våld, bara kritiserat sionisterna och den judiska staten”.
unable to prove Rami’s responsibility for its content and the last investigation was closed in 2004.

2.2. Communication in the newspapers

The *Radio Islam* media communication is about a mutual agreement in the Swedish press about accepting and refusing opinions and actions related to the topics of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, racism and tolerance in the public, aimed at keeping communication going. The connecting communications go far beyond the media offer of the community radio station, *Radio Islam*. The media event *Radio Islam* as such is only a starting point for developing topics that provoke numerous contributions and act as a kind of dynamite in Swedish public debate, and therefore guarantee further communications. The print media transmit the ruling discourse based on commonly shared collective knowledge and exclude the subordinated one. There are no major differences between the various newspapers. Different opinions on this case are published mainly outside the daily press, for example a contribution by Jan Myrdal regarding freedom of speech (in FiB/Kulturfront 6/90, 14-15/90, 17/90, 18/90). Prominent defenders of Rami from the initial period (such as Jan Myrdal, Per Gahrton, Jan Bergman and Lars Hillersberg) are published or quoted only if they apologize or explain their attitude often in connection with criticism of Israel as well as a demand for freedom of speech. Even contributions supporting another view are refused, which Hillersberg, for instance, complains about: “I have received a number of articles that have sided with me but which *Dagens Nyheter* has refused to publish”7 (*DN* 010428).

The distinction between the inclusion and exclusion of contributions is drawn with reference to the verdict of 1989. It becomes clear that defenders of Rami considered to be on the side of the racists and who receive no entrance into the daily press with this opinion and are therefore excluded. The communication processes in the daily press refer to pre-

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7 “Jag har också fått mig tillsänt flera artiklar som tagit mitt parti men som DN refuserat”.

22
ceding communication processes and to the expectations developed in the communication, as well as to common knowledge: that the programmes of Radio Islam and its editor Ahmed Rami are condemned by law as racist defamation. The verdict is used as an exclusion mechanism, as a leading distinction to decide who and what is accepted as a contribution and what is not.

However, within the boundaries of the media system, there is a great deal of space for topics of different types. Just this clear demarcation of the boundaries offers a certain safety in being able to illuminate the Rami case from different perspectives. The mainstream media know which contributions the public accepts and which not. Only Radio Islam carried out its own interpretation of the boundaries, which resulted in its losing its broadcasting license and therefore risking its survival as an organization. The attention in the mainstream media is shifted from the original event, that Radio Islam has distributed anti-Semitic propaganda, to a series of subsequent communications.

In the following section I will look at the main topics that have developed, and are still developing, connecting communications. The topics can be divided into contributions triggered by the initial event, that Radio Islam has distributed hate speeches (i.e., concerning Rami as a person and Radio Islam as well as its web site), and those merely using Rami as a reference point but treating other topics. The latter topics constitute the main part of the material and focus on almost all systems of society such as education, politics, science, law and media.

2.2.1. The beginning: The information was not selected

Before the verdict of 1989, there was little or no interest in the daily press to communicate the media offers by Radio Islam, or at least opinions about them. Information and utterances by Radio Islam were not selected and were therefore not on the media agenda. This non-selection (before the verdict) has shaped communications in the media to this day. In general, the contributions focus on the distinction between non-selected/selected topics. In a column on the creeping anti-Semitism in
society on the editorial page of *Dagens Nyheter*, former Vice Prime Minister, writer and commentator Per Ahlmark reminds us that:

The indifference in Sweden was striking when Ahmed Rami repeated Nazi agitation against Jews week after week.⁸ (DN 060324)

Ahlmark had already complained about this situation 12 years ago. In the evening paper *Expressen* he has criticised the lack of concern, although the press has received copies of the radio programmes and was informed. According to Ahlmark, there was also no connecting communication in the press after a TV programme:

I cannot remember one single newspaper that found it worthwhile to warn against the crudest anti-Jewish propaganda we have seen in any European country since the Second World War. The Swedish Committee Against Anti-Semitism [Svenska kommittén mot antisemitism] concluded that information about the new anti-Semitism must be broadened and improved. We made systematic recordings of Radio Islam’s programmes. We sent the transcripts to public opinion makers, newspapers, members of Parliament and the Chancellor of Justice. Their interest was negligible. […] The press was silent.⁹ (Expressen 920321)

On the debate page of the daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, freelance journalist Berit Hedeby joins in:

Everybody winked. Journalists winked. Everybody agreed that Ahmed Rami was belching forth his hatred against the Jews, but freedom of speech is sacred.¹⁰ (DN 920215)

Journalist Leif Zern generalizes this to all intellectuals and blamed them for their passivity, because they were silent for as long as possible (DN

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⁸ “När Ahmed Rami vecka efter vecka repeterade Hitlers agitation mot judarna var likgiltigheten i Sverige slående”.
⁹ “Jag minns inte att någon enda tidning ansåg det mödan värt att varna för den grövsta antijudiska hetsen i någon europeisk demokrati efter kriget. […] Den slutsats som Svenska kommittén mot antisemitism då drog var att informationen om den nya antisemitsmien måste vidgas och skärpas. Systematiskt gjorde vi bandupptagningar av Radio Islams program. Vi sände utskrifterna till debattörer, tidningar, riksdagsmän och JK. Intresset var obetydligt. […] Pressen teg”.
¹⁰ “Alla har blundat. Journalister har blundat. Alla har sagt visserligen spyr Ahmed Rami ut judehat, men yttrandefriheten är helig”.
Politicians were likewise invisible such as the former Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and the former leader of the liberal conservative Moderate Party Carl Bildt: “Ingvar Carlsson refused to make a public statement on the issue of Radio Islam. Carl Bildt’s indifference was also evident.”11 (DN 981126).

The act of non-selection of information can be explained with Luhmann’s theory of systems (see footnote 2). According to Luhmann, the problem of the media’s ignorance of some topics is due to the media themselves and their autopoiesis, which means that all selections the media make refer to their own system in order to maintain the function of that system. The function of the mass media system consists of connecting the individual social systems (such as political, legal, education, etc.) with each other, which has become necessary through the differentiation of society and the closure of its subsystems. How can the mass media fulfill this task? Coupling occurs with the help of the topics they select and edit. However, these non-selected topics mentioned above were not present in the inner-social environment of the mass media like in the political or legal system, so it is difficult to enter the topic canon of the mass media. The community radio stations do not belong to the preferred environment of the national mass media, in the same way the Svenska kommittén mot antisemitism (The Swedish Committee Against Anti-Semitism) does not. The event – a community radio station spreading anti-Semitic propaganda – was not classified as important information since the topic was not even reflected in other relevant social systems like the political or legal one. The media are not “better” than their environment. This also says something about the evaluation of the inner-social environment of the mass media: It is not easy for community radio stations, or in general for the un-established media, to attract attention from the mainstream media and to produce connecting communication if they are not supported by other systems. They do not belong to the prioritized environment of the established media (this can be compared to the investigations by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmberg Ruge (1965) on how events become news).

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11 “Ingvar Carlsson vägrade uttala sig om Radio Islam. Carl Bildts likgiltighet var också påtaglig”.

25
It is not until Rami is found guilty in court and the legal system has distributed a message that the information is selected and communicated by the newspapers. Simultaneously, the premises of the discourse are defined and Rami is a condemned Jew-baiter, which clarifies how anti-Semitism looks today – and with that, the point of departure of the communication. Before the verdict, the communication seemed to be indefinite; it could not presuppose anything. After the verdict, the former non-selected information can be selected and communicated. The verdict is both restricting and widening, and a starting point for the development of various topics in the media.

2.2.2. The construction of the person Ahmed Rami: The personified other

Ahmed Rami himself figures as an icon of an anti-Semite who at the beginning of his career was supported by Swedish public persons. *Radio Islam* is described by Per Ahlmark in a column as the “most brutal Nazi radio station in Europe after Hitler”\(^{12}\) (DN 991208), and the station represents open anti-Semitism and racism. Rami is, however, an immigrant, more precisely a “Muslim with a clearly fundamentalist stance”\(^{13}\); which is how Berit Hedeby expresses it in a debate article in the daily *Dagens Nyheter* (DN 920215). His religion is mentioned to strengthen his negative role, which throws light on society’s way of thinking concerning Muslims. The description of his fundamentalist conviction is increased in intensity by the following episode in the same article:

He organized, for instance, a demonstration through Radio Islam outside the Bonnier publishing house where participants shouted ‘[d]eath to *The Satanic Verses*,’ ‘death to Salman Rushdie,’ and ‘Allah is great.’\(^{14}\) (DN 920215)

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\(^{12}\) “mest brutala nazistiska radiostationen i Europa efter Hitlertiden”.

\(^{13}\) “muslim med klart fundamentalistisk inriktning”.

According to the quotation, Rami did not only produce radio programmes but also organized actions, which lives up to an image of a fundamentalist Islamist. The mediated event “Rami” carries a message: He is associated with a strange racism, coming from outside into society. Rami is not a passive immigrant living on social benefits, but a politically active one and a member of the Social Democratic Party (SAP). This is interpreted in a column by freelance journalist Anders J. Carlberg as follows:

Rami wants to influence Swedish opinion. He approaches the power bloc most susceptible to infiltration. Rami’s short-term goal is to spread hatred of the Jews; the long-term goal is to weaken Israel.¹⁵ (DN 920327).

This quote shows the assumed essence of his actions: Rami knows exactly what he wants and exploits the political possibilities for his purpose, which is a threat to Swedish society. An immigrant in combination with anti-Semitism is twice as perilous.

¹⁵ “Rami vill påverka Sverige. Han söker sig till det maktblock som är lättast att infiltrera [...] Ramis delmål är att sprida judehat; det långsiktiga målet är att försvaga Israel”.
In another debate article on the same page as Hedeby’s debate article, Member of Parliament Håkan Holmberg (fp) explains that:

Ahmed Rami’s Radio Islam mouthpiece for hatred of the Jews – that is, for open anti-Semitic and Nazi propaganda – has not yet fallen silent. Despite a prison sentence, Ahmed Rami remains unperturbed, content that he is still able to manipulate Swedish law and Swedish democratic values, and grateful that he has been able for four years to exploit Swedish radio to broadcast his Jew-hating message.16 (DN 920215).

In just these two sentences, the word “Sverige/svensk” (Sweden/Swedish) appears four times. This intensifies the message that Swedish society is threatened, because “Rami laughs and mocks, not only Jews but all

of Sweden” 17 (DN 920215). Rami seems to be laughing at Swedish society. Swedish values stand in contrast here to non-Swedish ones like propaganda and manipulation. This accentuation of the Swedish nation implies that the threat comes from outside, or from the environment. It is a threat; the common patterns of being a racist are questioned in the evening paper Expressen by the journalist Fredrik Nejman:

Rami is much more dangerous than racist groups such as VAM and other violent hooligans. They are deranged. Rami is intelligent. Yes, he is very clever. He is well-dressed in white shirt and tie, he is eloquent, and he seems to be rational. But he does not care a bit about the truth.18 (Expressen 920218)

The danger is therefore incalculable. The other is the personified uncertainty, and cannot be measured with common criteria. Rami is both civilized and primitive, intelligent and foolish, which distinguishes him from people who are easy to see through. Stuart Hall explained the binary construction, that:

people who are in any way significantly different from the majority [...] are frequently exposed to this binary form of representation. They seem to be represented through sharply opposed, polarized, binary extremes [...] And they are often required to be both things at the same time! (Hall 1997, 229)

The construction of the person Ahmed Rami concentrates mainly on the first period of the discourse, that is, 1992. With this, the other, Ahmed Rami, is defined and simply recognized in the discourse. In the context of Swedish society, he is characterized by drawing distinctions between minority/majority, Islamist/Muslim, anti-Semite/Arab, anti-Semite/a person who does not hate Jews, immigrant/Swedish person, active immigrant/passive immigrant, one who takes advantage of the system/one who benefits the system, and racist from the outside/racist from the inside.

17 ”Rami skrattar och hånar, inte bara när det gäller judar, utan också Sverige”.
2.2.3. The Cultural system: reappraisal

Rami’s former writings, such as the book *Vad är Israel* (1988) (What is Israel), appear in a new light and are scrutinized. The leading distinction is between the inclusion and exclusion of the book in public libraries. Should it be removed from the shelves of the library (GP 950222)? In a wider sense, Rami’s reliability is called into question. Contributions circle the topic, how *Vad är Israel* is to be evaluated: Is it a specialized book about the history of Israel or an anti-Semitic debate book? Contributions appear, analyzing the book’s content. Author Hans W. Levy (Chairperson of the Jewish Association) has summarized his analysis by saying that it is anti-Semitic propaganda (GP 950303) and should be catalogued differently, i.e. not with specialized literature. Journalist Per Nygren compared the location of Rami’s book with that of other controversial books like *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler, that is on the shelves containing books about Germany, or like the Hermann Göring biography by Holocaust denier David Irving, which has a ‘genealogical research’ index label. If Rami’s book is to be removed, the same applies to other controversial books; is the gist of the contributions.

With this, the topic containing direct reference to Rami is exhausted (GP 950312). It seems too complex to perform a convincing evaluation of the subject, especially since a previous verdict has declared the right to freedom of speech regarding this book. In spite of the universality of the problem, the national newspapers do not select this information regarding cataloging the book; it is more of local interest to the local newspaper *Göteborgs Posten*, where the library in question is situated. The topic is more suitable to the specialized press because the broader interest is probably not about where a book is located but mainly about searching a book as quickly and easily as possible.

2.2.4. Rami and his supposed defenders

From media studies, we know that a successful concept for long-lived topics is their concentration on prominent people. In this case, there are prominent people coming from the social fields of politics, science and culture and having received the stigma of having stood up for Ahmed
Rami. Some individual sub-cases appear – Hillersberg’s debate is called “The hottest culture debate of the Spring”\textsuperscript{19} (DN 010512), and it is common to the constructed sub-cases that these people behave controversially compared to the expected public opinion.

According to Luhmann, they have understood the difference between information and utterance differently, at least at the beginning of Rami’s radio activity, or put another way: Their understanding differs from that of the mainstream media. Writer Jan Myrdal argues strongly for the universal right to freedom of speech. Artist Lars Hillersberg illustrated one of Rami’s books, and has initially shown sympathy for Rami’s different viewpoint on the Palestine-Israel conflict. Politician Per Gahrton had taken part in programmes on Radio Islam between 1987 and 1988. In the beginning, before the verdict, Gahrton defended the broadcaster as a legitimate voice in the Palestine conflict. History of Religion Professor at Uppsala University Jan Bergman acted as an expert witness in Rami’s hearing, engaged by the defence to analyse the theological background of Rami’s comments against Israel and Jews in general. His evidence was strongly criticized afterwards, with critics citing incompetence. It is alleged that the people mentioned above have acted in an anti-Semitic way. This is a tricky affair since they are public people, and such accusations put their reputations at stake.

\textsuperscript{19} “Vårens hetaste kulturdebatt”.

31
Judehatet tar sig många uttryck

Lars Hillsberg, som fått stadig konstruktion, bemötte på gårdagens kultursida besväringarna mot honom att hans teckningar är antisemitska. Jackes Jakubowski, kulturskribent och redaktör för Judisk Krönika, skriver i dag om den antisemitska tradition han ansvar för Hillsberg arbetar i.

I Lars Villhelmssons omfattande produktion av essaer och debatter om den rassiska konflikten i Sverige är det inte ovanligt att hans uttalanden i sina aviser på 1990-talet medverkar i det arbete som de ska göra. Hillsberg, som är en av de mest kontroversiella avrättningar i efterkrigstiden, har också haft en betydande inflytande inom antirassism och den norra Europa.

Ingen som vet något om Hillsberg, eller om hans politiska aktiviteter, kan bedöma hans inverkan på det svenska samhället. Hans teckningar har dock haft en stor respekt i de är omfattande i sin konstnärliga genomgripande och erbjöd också en trovärdig insikt i det svenska samhället.

De båda avbildningarna av Hillsberg är inte ensidiga, utan inkluderar både teckningar och fotografier. De artificiella konstruktionerna av Hillsberg kan dock vara en tillbakablick på den pågående debatten om det svenska samhällets inflytande på det internationella fältet.

In a newspaper article in an evening paper, it was noted that Gahrton denies the existence of anti-Semitism in Sweden after 1945 (Expressen 991119). Gahrton, Myrdal and neo-Nazis are lumped together in a news article, and it was said that the browns and reds now have a common cause (AB 970321). Gahrton was also connected with criticizing EU opposition. He is against the EU project, which Ahlmark comments on in a column in the local newspaper Göteborgs Posten with the words: "The same Gahrton that campaigned for the neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic Radio Islam a few years ago" (GP 941107).

Gahrton, as a supposed anti-Semite, stands to discredit the entire EU opposition. If one wants to criticize his political actions in general, this event is singled out to intensify the argument. Gahrton appears as an example of anti-Semitism in Swedish society after 1945.

Myrdal is a controversial author and his media contributions have increased, in which he discussed the Charter of the PEN organization and demands to counteract any restriction of the right to freedom of speech in a person's own country as well as to bridge the differences between

20 "Det samma Gahrton, som för några år sen bedrev kampanj för den nynazistiska och antisemitska Radio Islam".
races and religions (SvD 970311). From this, connecting contributions have appeared that deal with his opinion, recall his attitude towards Radio Islam and question his role in PEN (AB 970317). Excluding him from the organization is one of the discussed issues, e.g. by writer Agneta Pleijel in a debate article in the culture section of Svenska Dagbladet (970313). The contributions are based on former debates about Myrdal’s actions, and take advantage of recalling his controversial arguments. In general, the entire topic is about the boundaries of the organization PEN, what should be accepted or rejected and who should or should not belong to the organization. The treatment of Myrdal’s point of view serves to draw a distinction between PEN and its environment.

Also in the Bergman case it is obvious that communication, according to Luhmann, is always open to many connections. The case expands and spreads to the university; the actions of the theological department and the board of the university are examined. Contributions draw distinctions between the scholars’ competence and incompetence, between inner-institutional democracy and lack of democracy, and between the courage in upholding one’s convictions and lack of courage. Mentioning again the role of Bergman and the faculty, arguments concerning assumed anti-Semitism at the university were increased in order to gain attention for the story. This is shown, e.g., in an article in the correspondence column, in which Uppsala University is blamed for its anti-Jewish traditions, for instance from the Nazi time, which have again become evident in connection with the Radio Islam trial (SvD 971218).

According to Hillersberg, the aesthetics of his art have been revaluated. Almost ten years after the first contributions the debate flared up in connection with an award he received (He was awarded national income assurance, guaranteeing a monthly income). This provoked a series of contributions (about 10 articles), systematized under the heading “Debate: Anti-Semitic satire?” in the cultural section of the daily Dagens Nyheter, and running for almost two months. His caricatures were judged as vulgar, coarse and open anti-Semitic, such as in a debate article of Jackie Jakubowski, editor of Judisk krönika (DN 010302) which

21 “Debatt: antisemitisk satir?”
Hillersberg himself response to in a counter-debate article (DN 010419). The Hillersberg debate also opens up for contributions that go beyond his person and address the political culture in Sweden in general, which is characterized as being insensitive to anti-Semitism, pointed out by historian Henrik Bachner in another debate article (DN 010307). The so-called Hillersberg scandal (DN 010307) has resulted in the discussion of mainly two main problems, which are of both individual and general interest and therefore guarantee connecting communications. The contributions deal with the more sophisticated aesthetic question of what is permitted and accepted in the arts, and lead to the more general political question of whether controversial artists should be entitled to state support. Should they be included or excluded from state support? The latter question especially generates attention because it is directed at the reader’s own purse: Are readers ready to pay for controversial artists via their tax money? This provokes new contributions in order to keep the attention alive and thus ensure the success of the mass medium. This mixture of general and specific topics opens up for contributions from other systems of society, which are not analysed here as they go beyond the scope of this material.
"Det är grovt, öppet, vulgärt"

En högereextremist som uttrycker samma antisemitska idéer som Lars Hillsberg skulle fördömas, hävdar Henrik Bachner.

"Dansen kring gudiklaven" ur Lars Hillsberg's serien "Dez", från 1971

Due to the clearly defined main topic the public people can be referred to, the individuals can be used argumentatively in different contexts. The constructed mass media topics must be obvious and defined, and thus recognizable, in the communication. By reading only a few words, one is expected to be able to comprehend what the question is about. There is no place for complicated or complex explanations. Also, the fact that the people mentioned above have dissociated themselves from Rami – for example, a short news text says Gahrton exhorts Radio Islam not to misuse his name (DN 971125) and approves of the jury’s verdict, but these facts are not picked up in the connecting communication. This does not find a place in the narrative, because it could undermine the symbolic power of the people mentioned. Only their former allied status with Rami counts. The individual cases are an effective method for in-
tensifying messages and finally for attracting attention to the problems described. As metonyms they do not bother with detailed explanations, because the name-dropping presupposes knowledge. Myrdal is a sponsor of “the anti-Semitic crusade”22 (SvD 950127) and Gahrton quoted Jackie Jakubowski, who called him an “anti-Semitic boor”23 (DN 930304). In order to reduce the complexity of the problem and to be able to handle it in the mass media, the media communication is based on concrete, manageable questions such as: Is Bergman incompetent? What is expected of a politician such as Gahrton who has supposed anti-Semitic opinions? Should Myrdal be excluded from PEN? Does an artist such as Hillersberg, who draws anti-Semitic caricatures, deserve state support?

Simultaneously, the people mentioned are constructed as standing for a creeping and subtle anti-Semitism in society – unlike Rami’s open anti-Semitism – and as such they are brought up again and again. Keeping people in their places is crucial to the stability of the media communication. Being able to see whether they are in or out of place is a necessary prerequisite for successful connecting communication. Ahmed Rami and his supposed defenders are seen to be out of place.

There are also exceptions to this, that being associated with Rami can also mean having a good reputation, as a contribution about Hanna Zetterberg shows. She says goodbye to politics, and consequently “Radio Islam has lost an object of hate among the known rulers of Sweden”24 (GP 971214). Another article about Yehuda Bauer, a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who has described Radio Islam as the most brutal neo-Nazi radio station in Europe almost since the beginning of its broadcasting, shows that there were also opponents. Bauer then became an advisor to the Swedish government in connection with a Holocaust conference (DN 010911). Or, a contribution by writer Per Wästberg, who intensifies his reputation and credibility with reference to his early opposition to Rami: If one is known as being (or having been) opposed to Rami, one can take the liberty of criticizing Israeli...

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22 “det antismetiska korståget”.
23 “antijudisk grobian”.
occupation politics (DN 030613). One belongs to either the defenders of *Radio Islam* or its opponents. However, more space is given to the defenders. Evidently, they deliver more substance for controversy, which makes connecting communication easier.

### 2.2.5. The political system: Threat to democracy

Another long-lived topic concerns racism in society in connection with *Radio Islam*. This is a topic that is so elastic that the mass media can reach all social systems. The leading distinction focuses on an unconcerned society versus a concerned society, regarding racism.

In the contributions, it is assumed that anti-Semitism does not only belong to the past in Swedish society and it is not considered marginal, thereby distinguishing Sweden from other countries. In her article on an international conference on the Holocaust, reporter Cecilia Jacobsson stresses its relevance for Sweden:

> But Sweden has something that does not exist in other countries – *Radio Islam*. Anti-semitic propaganda can be disseminated in the name of freedom of speech. Neo-nazism gains a foothold in Sweden much more easily than in Germany, for instance.\(^{25}\) (DN 971204)

This is also highlighted and substantiated in a book by Swedish historian Henrik Bachner, who stresses that negative attitude towards Jews slumber in wide sections of society, and that the public is partially blind to the subtle forms of anti-Semitism (Bachner 1999, 14), which is referred to in several articles (e.g. DN 010307). This description of the climate in society is supported by commentators who base their contributions on the assumption that a hidden anti-Semitism exists in Swedish society, and the supposed defenders of *Radio Islam* are proof of that. The connecting communication in the newspapers deals with society, which has changed compared to the Sweden of 100 years ago. An editorial in the evening paper *Expressen* concludes that contemporary Swedish society is

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no longer the culturally homogeneous and relatively secure world of Carl Larsson (Swedish painter and interior designer, 1853-1919). That world lasted only a century and has been changed by global economy, travel, mass media and enemies of democracy who spread hate, like Radio Islam (Expressen 920221). So, the peace in society was interrupted by negative external influences. Radio Islam acts as a threat to democracy, as the seamy side of evolution that undermines societal progress. Or, as Ahlmark puts it in a column in the local daily Göteborgs Posten: “Radio Islam [is] a symbol for the degradation that has once more hit our country”.26 (GP 950506). In these quoted contributions, an enlargement of the term Radio Islam occurs: It typifies a society that is not watchful enough regarding racism and that does not respond (or responds too slowly) to Nazi propaganda. At the same time, it stands for a society that is not Carl Larsson-like anymore, but whose harmony has been spoiled by the outside world. The peace of the country was disturbed by World War II and the Holocaust, begun by Germany. Radio Islam becomes the metonym for a changed society that does not do enough to preserve its own democracy.

Facing racism and anti-Semitism leads to the state authorities. They are a popular object to exert pressure on. The contributions focus on the distinction between acting wrongly and acting correctly. The state authorities are blamed for creeping racism: On the one hand, authorities seem to approve anti-Semitic propaganda (as they did with Radio Islam in the beginning) and on the other hand they reject asylum applications from Russian Jews in spite of documented pursuit in their home country, which is highlighted by the chairman of the Jewish Assembly Salomo Berlinger in a debate article (DN 951216), or send refugees to their secure death, accentuated in an editorial (SvD 971118). The contributions have criticized the intolerance and inhumanity of the authorities with reference to Radio Islam, and in so doing the effectiveness of their argumentation has increased. For example, the Rami incident is used by

26 “Radio Islam [är] en symbol för den förnedring som åter drabbat vårt land”.
27 Carl Larsson (1853-1919), Swedish national-romantic painter and interior designer. His art has become almost synonymous with the picture of Sweden.
journalist Macej Zaremba to demonstrate the slowness of the authorities in connection with press ethics:

[…]

justice works slowly or not at all. If I remember correctly, a number of writers accused Ahmed Rami’s radio station of racial agitation long before the Chancellor of Justice realized there was a duty to prosecute.28(DN 940407)

Following the tenor of Zaremba’s argument: It was only after three years of transmitting hate propaganda that Radio Islam was forbidden to broadcast. The state authorities, including the government, are the addressees, are compromised, and continued acting wrongly. Their reputation is damaged and this can be referred to at any time and in various contexts.

28 “[…]

rättvisans kvarnar mal för långsamt eller inte alls. Om jag minns rätt, klandrade en rad skribenter Ahmed Ramis Radiostation för hets mot folkgrupp långt innan justitiekanslern hunnit uppfatta att här förelåg en åtalsplikt”. 39
2.2.6. The education system: Rami in the schools?

A popular topic attracting attention is the school system. The school system is a problematic area that secures continuous attention, because every reader is more or less affected by it. Complaints about insufficient school education comprise a long-running issue, and it is here that the connection to Rami takes place. This topic is also connected to politics, because actions are required, which results in a book project about the Holocaust.

Due to Rami’s definitely negative role, it is hardly possible for representatives of the school system to argue differently. Rami’s role is marked in the newspapers and it is very difficult for nuances to enter that minefield. One such attempt is made by Dagens Nyheter, however: On the debate page a history and religion teacher explained that...

"Rami ingen antessim"
has been invited to her high school and that the students are supposed to examine his arguments, because:

upper secondary school students know the difference between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, in contrast to the groups who want to stop Rami [...] It is the teacher’s task to clarify conditions, state facts, and put them in context – not to censor and conceal them.29 (DN 911130)

DN chooses to let her opinion be condemned in five counter-articles. For example, one editorial states: “it is deeply worrying if there are more teachers who are as naïve as the upper secondary school teacher ... in questions of anti-Semitism and racism”30 (DN 911201). Yael Feiler, board member of the organization Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, begins his debate article with the phrases:

Gunnel Wahlström, teacher in religion and history, can hardly be thought to be serious in her defence of Ahmed Rami ... Does Gunnel Wahlström belong to those teachers of history who share Rami’s ‘historical analysis’? Unfortunately, judging from her article this cannot be ruled out.31 (DN 911207)

The teacher is seen as either naïve or as a supporter of Rami’s ideas. As such, she herself is given no more space for connecting communication. The evening paper Expressen quotes representatives from different social systems in order to condemn the project of the teacher. These include Per Ahlmark, former Vice Prime Minister: “It is abominable that they let in Sweden’s most infamous Nazi”32. And Agneta Rehnvall from the

29 “[...] gymnasieeleverna kan nämligen, till skillnad från de grupper i samhället som vill stoppa Rami, skilja på antisionism och antissemitism [...] Att klargöra förhållanden, ge fakta och sätta in dem i sitt sammanhang är lärarens uppgift – inte att censurera eller dölja”.
30 “[...] är fler lärare lika aningslösa i frågor om antisemitism och rasism som den gymnasielärare [...] så är det djupt oroande”.
31 “Religions- och historieläraren Gunnel Wahlström kan knappast betrakta som seriöst i sitt försvaret av Ahmed Rami [...] Tillhör Gunnel Wahlström kanske de historielärare som delar Ramis ’historiska analys’? Av hennes artikel att döma kan jag tyvärr inte utesluta detta”.
32 “Det är avskyvärt att de släpper in Sveriges mest kände nazist”.
school authority: “This is a very unpleasant affair”. 33 And historian Hen-
ric Bachner:

“naïve schools that do not say no.[...] Rami is a misunderstood supporter of the
Palestinian cause when he is in fact a Nazi.”34 (Expressen 911218)

Representatives from politics, the school system and science make it
clear that the teacher’s project is wrong. All contributions stress the
same opinion: Ahmed Rami must not be given room to distribute his
ideas.

The topic is about the distinction between the exclusion and inclu-
sion of Rami as a person in the school discourse, with a clear focus on
excluding him. The other side of the distinction, including him as a
person in the school’s discussions, is hardly considered because of his
clearly defined role as a person who spreads racist ideas. Therefore, the
issue treated in the media lacks controversy for acquiring more connect-
ing communications. Everyone (except the teacher) agrees that he
should be excluded, and that the teacher’s project is counterproductive.
With this, the issue is mainly brought to an end. From a temporal point
of view this special topic has lasted for four months, and is exhausted
rather quickly.

33 “Det här en mycket olustig historia”.
34 “[...] aningslösa skolor som inte säger nej [...] Rami är en missförstådd Palestina-
vän när han egentligen är nazist”.

42
"En salig röra utan trovärdighet"

Gunnar Wahlströms försvar av Ahmed Rami är inte serööst, skriver Yael Feiler.

Religiösa- och historieläraren Gunnar Wahlström kan knappast betraktas som seriöshet i sitt försvar av Ahmed Rami (DN Debatt 30/11). Av en historielärare väntar jag mig att hon åtminstone skulle nämna den historieforskningsarbete som Rami ägnar sig åt, och som berövar även honom trovärdigheten i hans försvar av palestiniernas sak.

Ahmed Rami påstår att judeförbindelsen aldrig har ägt rum. Dessutom skulle judarina enligt Rami ha ljust ihop hela skräckscenariolet med förintelseidén för att kunna lägga beslag på Palestina. Detta är han fält för i domstol.

Att en historielärare tycker att en sådan person är lämplig att informera om "palestiniernas situation på de områden som Israel ockuperat" är mycket anmärkningsvärt, särskilt när hon utesluter hans revisionistiska ideer i sin artikel. Tillhörr Gunnar Wahlström kanske de historielärare som delar "historiska analys"? Av hennes artikel att döma kan jag tyvärr inte utesluta detta.

Eftersom jag tillhör dem som håller med om att "palestinierna var Gulfkrigets verkliga fölrorare" (tillsammans med irakerna och kuwaiterna) och att det är viktigt att informera om det brutala förtrycket palestinierna i de av Israel ockuperade områdena utsätts för, skulle jag anklaga Gunnar Wahlström (och även andra larare) att bjuda in någon som även palestinierna godkänner. Av mina palestinska vänner har jag hört att de inte vill ha något med Rami att göra.

Gunnar Wahlström anklagar "den svenska judenheten" för att inte acceptera distinktionen mellan antisemitism och antisionismen. Men själv bidrar hon med sina klumpiga formuleringar till denna läsning i diskussionen: Hon talar om "en judisk debattör" som "aldrig skulle" uttala sig på ett visst sätt, men i stället "uttrycker sig som socialist". En generalisering som skulle få vem som helst att höja på ögonbrynen. Hon talar om "föraktfull tystnad" i förhållandet till Rami – men uttrycker förakt själva mot de "socialister" som (dessutom) använder sig av "myndighetspraktik".

Här har ni juden! En intellektuell konspirator i maktposition. Jag kan gott och väl tänka mig att Svenska kommunen mot antisemitism har sakliga skäl att ägna sig åt hennes uttalanden.

Jag har, bland annat, i en artikel till DN

Gunnar Wahlström beklagar slutet runt det faktum att en "klargörande debatt" mellan Ahmed Rami och överrabbinnen Narrowe eller (!) någon representant från Israels ambassad inte är möjlig.

Jag frågar: bär inte en gymnasielärare kunna skilja mellan statens representanter – och religionen? Hon kunde ju skilja mellan Rami och Nazi, enligt henne är han en antisionist som vänder sig mot staten Israel. Vad har han på så fall att debattera om med överrabbinnen, religiösen representant?

Och tror Gunnar Wahlström verkligen att ett möte mellan Israels ambassad och Rami kan bli värdigt och meningsfullt?

Själv, trots att jag inte är rädd för antisemitister "även om det synder i skinnen", finner jag det, som vilken jud som helst, väldigt motsvärjande att bemöta "den fräcka marockanen" (nu är det sagt) som förnekar det värsta brott som begåtts mot judarna i vårt århundrade. Men jag tror att gärna dr Mahloof, PLO:s representant i Stockholm (vilket jag och mina vänner i JIPF, judar för israelisk-palestinsk fred, har gjort och tänker fortsätta att göra).

Däremot är det verkligen beklagligt att inte Israel erkänner PLO som palestiniernas legitima representant – men man kan knappast vänta sig att Israels ambassad ska börja agera självständigt? Men det var väl inte statskunskap som Gunnar Wahlström undervisade i?

YAELE FEILER
Styrelseledamot i JIPF

DN 7/12 1991
2.2.7. The science system: Racism and historiography

The press media include those contributions that deal with anti-Semitism in their own Christian culture from a historical point of view. This guarantees further communication, because experts can explain the facts, and neglected and controversial topics can possibly come to light. Experts are always welcome to contribute their point of view in the press because this intensifies the media’s reliability.

Referring to Rami, dark sides of history began entering the newspapers. Contributions dealt on the one hand with Sweden’s own history of hating Jews. This topic opens the door for historians, who can analyse the view of Europeans regarding Jews for centuries, for instance (e.g. historian Kristian Gerner (SvD 960609), or illuminate the relationship between the labour movement and anti-Semitism in a review in the culture section by journalist Mikael Löfgren (DN 010708). The contributions jump to a Marxist debate, in which Marx’s view on Judaism is analysed according to his writings on the Jewish question. In a debate article in the culture section, Sociologist Anders Ramsey reveals that anti-Semites like *Radio Islam* have made use of Karl Marx’s article on the Jewish question (DN 000114). Here, the argument of the ‘common cause of browns and reds’ can be treated.

On the other hand, dealing with the past also opens up for touching on particular controversial incidents, such as the registration policy of Jews by the security police SÄPO during the period 1938-1943. In an interview with journalist Per Nygren, who has written articles on Nazism, a parallel is drawn between SÄPO’s list and the list of Jews on Radio Islam’s web site (GP 971130), connoting that Sweden has its own history of registration of Jews, carried out by a state authority no less. Comparing the media discussion of the dark sides of history such as registration or forced sterilization policies with *Radio Islam*’s web site, writer Yrsa Stenius argues for a focus on the present time, which to her means in plain English stopping *Radio Islam* on the Internet (AB 971207).

The distinction between past and present as regards to anti-Semitism opens up for contributions that come to terms with the ‘blind spots’ of Sweden’s own historiography. Are there examples of hate propaganda,
anti-Semitism in the past? Historical events, mainly present in the specialist literature, become a topic of the newspaper. Expert knowledge about history is published, as are opinions about the past and present, which often results in demanding measures against the continuing actions of Radio Islam. The tenor of the arguments is that one has to learn from the past and act against the propaganda of Radio Islam. Here, the media fulfil the function of watchdog in society by bringing together expert and public knowledge.

2.2.8. The legal system: incapable and powerless

Usually, when problems occur, one asks the legal system to solve them via law. Therefore, the connection of racism and the legal system is a successful strategy by the mass media to satisfy reader expectations, as well as the media’s thirst for bad news. Contributions revolve around the problem of how to combat racism and anti-Semitic propaganda legally. In line with the media logic, they draw attention to gaps in the law, stressed for instance in an interview with well-known physician and Member of the Parliament Jerzy Einhorn (Expressen 920218). The contributions ask also for the content and the legal interpretation of the Freedom of Speech and Demonstration Act (EX 920318). The practice of the law is examined (SvD 960804), and its effectiveness doubted (GP 960825, DN 010821). Immediate action in cases of law violation are demanded, e.g. in a leading article (DN 960806). These issues of examining practices and doubting effectiveness are patterns that can be connected to other problems, not only to questions of fighting racism in society, and are a successful strategy for organizing connecting communication.

In connection with the development of the new medium of the Internet, a wave of separate sub-topics have emerged that gain specific actuality because of its successful breakthrough. The Internet reaches as such all systems of the environment of the mass media and is therefore a popular topic. Contributions on Rami and the Internet deal with how and the extent to which legislation can control the new medium, because available laws are not sufficient, which were shown in articles by jour-
nalist Per Nygren in 1997 as well as seven years later (GP 971121, GP 040411). International cooperation is needed, as can be read in a news agency report (SvD 980421). Controlling the Internet is a popular debate topic that fills the newspapers even today, e.g. in an article criticizing the authorities, especially the prosecution, who seem to act insufficiently in stopping the *Radio Islam* web site. In a debate article in the culture section (DN 050726), journalist and writer Ola Larsmo proclaims that the politicians and authorities have abdicated.

Emphasizing the connection to Rami, the legal system is also placed in a negative light; both missing laws and inadequate actions were denounced. A complicated and complex problem is simplified, and there are clear judgments about who is acting wrongly and what is not working. The contributions are easy to grasp and open up for more contributions. On the one side there is the technological development of the Internet, and on the other side the law that should regulate it and make it manageable. But this is seen as an equation that does not work out. The newspapers investigate and uncover the deplorable state of affairs. With the help of these topics, journalism can make its socially moral function visible and reinforce its incontestability among other social systems. The media system appears in a light that confirms that it is necessary to observe the other social systems for a better society.

### 2.2.9. The media system

One might assume that under this heading the press media would be occupied with self-reflexivity and possibly with observing their own coverage of Rami. However, this is not the case. The coverage was presumably understood as ‘normal’ – after all the criticism of the failure to mention the propaganda of *Radio Islam* before the verdict, as mentioned above – and the environment of the media has not reacted negatively to the media, so that contributions of this kind ‘were sorted out’ and thus declared to be non-information. In addition, the self-description of the media system consists of mirroring of the world as it is, and if there are no problems, i.e., ‘manipulations’ in the coverage, there is normally no
need for such contributions on the media’s coverage, from the media’s own point of view.

Only one article deals with self-reflection, questioning the selection of contributors and thereby the reputation of the newspaper. The issue again is the distinction between inclusion and exclusion, namely the inclusion of the wrong people in an article series on racism. However, it does not concern the newspaper itself but instead one of its competitors. Under the heading ”Aftonbladet trivializes anti-Semitism”,35 historian Henrik Bachner criticizes the evening paper Aftonbladet for selecting the wrong people (i.e., Hillersberg and Myrdal) as representatives of the antiracist side.

Publishing the opinions of individuals who give vent to, trivialize or defend or anti-Semitism in a special issue on racism is macabre to say the least. Doesn’t anti-Semitism belong to the racism Aftonbladet claims it combats?36 (DN 920303)

35 “Aftonbladet trivialiserar antisemitism”.

Aftonbladet trivialiserar antisemitism
According to DN, these people’s reputations have been damaged, and they are therefore not quotable in this context. The seriousness of the special issue of the evening paper was called into question, which contributes to damaging its image.

As mentioned above, the topic of the Internet is a rich source for connecting communications. Since the mid-90s, Rami has also been present on the Internet. He has again been spreading information, and the press media select it. The media reflected his web site as a threat (AB 970321) and judged it to be anti-Semitic like his radio programmes. In particular, the published list of about 400 Swedes and their political opinions concerning Jews has provoked contributions (e.g. GP 971202), which has resulted in further topics extending the present event. For example, drawing a parallel to the so-called IB affair (the Information office, IB), in which the Social Democrats (SAP) registered the opinions of people until the mid-70s, it opens up for a new topic with the chance for further connecting communications (AB 970321).

However, the main contributions deal with the possibilities and consequences of the new medium, the Internet. In light of the Rami event, the various dimensions of the technical improvement in the field of computer technology can be debated. This is an inexhaustible topic that began mainly in 1997 and inspires individual contributions even today. Due to the easy access it provides, the Internet makes it easier to distribute unwanted content such as the registration of certain people, and the circulation of xenophobic opinions (SvD 971209), which gives the newspaper reason to think about the consequences of this new medium in several aspects.

36 “Att publicera personer som öppet uttrycker, försvarar eller trivialiserar antisemitism i ett temanummer om rasism är minst sagt makabert. Är det så att antisemitism inte ingår i den rasism Aftonbladet säger sig vilja bekämpa?”
In association with Rami, the Internet appears in a negative light and offers space for moral panic. It is called “the most important propaganda channel of today”37 (GP 960610), because extremists of different kinds can act without interference. A contribution in the domestic section of the newspaper Svenska Dagbladet refers to an inquiry of the journal Expo:

"Internet has become an increasingly important instrument for Swedish neo-Nazis and racists. [...] Ahmed Rami, the notorious anti-Semite, and his Radio Islam are far from being alone."38 (SvD 971210)

37 “dagens viktigaste propagandakanal”
38 “Internet har blivit ett allt viktigare instrument för svenska nynazister och rasister [...] Den notoriske antisemiten Ahmed Rami och hans Radio Islam är långt ifrån ensam.”
The police cannot act, which gives the media reason to deal with internal problems of the police, such as staff reductions (SVD 971119). This connects to defence matters, because today the war takes place on the field of information. ‘Computer soldiers’ are supposed to be trained in order to control the information war (SvD 980205). In other contributions, using the Internet is compared to the history of using other technologies and is placed in a more historic perspective, such as in a leading article of *Dagens Nyheter*:

Since internet is a new and relatively unknown phenomenon to most people, the medium itself attracts as much attention as does the content on the Radio Islam web page. Just as video was connected to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and other violent movies in the early ‘80s, today many people think of internet in terms of child pornography, racism, and the manufacture of bombs.39 (DN 971122)

The medium is new, and this intensifies the fear of not being able to react correctly while the distribution of unwanted information increases. But keeping in mind other new technologies, it is only a question of time until the panic is over. This kind of moral panic appeared mainly during 1996 and 1997, and at the beginning of 2000 the topic of Rami related to Internet has again entered the newspapers in debates over Rami’s Internet activities, now mostly referring to legal measures and data protection.

Like the Internet, community radio was seen as a place for spreading racist and Nazi ideas. According to an article in the culture section by journalist Stefan Carlsson, the right extremists fill Stockholm’s community radio scene:

There are at present six right wing extremist radio stations that broadcast racist propaganda for eight hours between Friday and Saturday.40 (DN 960607)

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39 “Eftersom Internet för de flesta människor är en ny och för många också relativt okänd företeelse väcker spridningsformen nu väl så stor uppmärksamhet som själva innehållet på Radio Islams hemsida. Liksom video vid 80-talets början förknippas med Motorsågsmassakern’ och andra våldsfilmer associerar många i dag Internet med barnpornografi, bombtillverkning och rasism.”

40 “Nu finns sex högerextrema stationer som tillsammans sänder rasistisk propaganda åtta timmar fredagar och lördagar.”
Or with reference to a scientific report, racist groups spread their messages via community radio, especially in the cities of Stockholm and Malmö, which is illegal according to sociologist Birgitta Löwander, who has written a report on racism on the radio (NA 981210). Finally, it was asked whether the concept of community radio is successful:

The worst crimes against freedom of speech in Swedish legal history have been committed in community radio.41 (Dagen 980318)

Also, in the culture section of Dagens Nyheter, Jackie Jakubowski stresses that community radio stations have not fulfilled their task:

Community radio emerged after a Parliament resolution to increase freedom of speech and broaden the formation of public opinion. Radio Islam’s anti-Semitic and Nazi agitation was hardly what was intended.42 (DN 970807)

Generally, Rami seems to be a threat to the democratic potential of the medium, because one believed that it would be calm after he was forbidden to broadcast, but Jackie Jakubowski observed that “three years later, the same opinions are still being expressed”43 (DN 960607). Rami seems to have successors, and this also depends on the medium. Through these contributions, a whole medium has been damaged and is associated with the distribution of hate speeches.

41 “Det är i närradion som det värsta yttrandefrihetsbrott i den moderna svenska rättshistorien begåtts”.
42 “Närradion tillkom efter riksdagens beslut för att öka yttrandefriheten och bredda opinionsbildningen. Det var knappast Radio Islams antisemitiska och nazistiska hets man haft i åtanke”.
43 “tre år senare hörs liknande tongångar som då”.
Community radio appears as a medium for expressing extreme opinions in relation to the intended purpose of promoting the freedom of speech. Another trial against the community radio station Sadaje Shora broadcasting in Persian was mentioned in the contributions. The station was reported to the police because of its defamation of certain individuals. In
the newspaper report, a parallel is drawn to Radio Islam to draw attention to this case (GP 960712, GP 971221). However, the judge cleared the radio of any crime (GP 980530) and this event remains only a topic for the local newspaper Göteborgs Posten. Compared to the Rami event, no well-known people were involved, the broadcast was only in Persian, and the radio was not punished by law.

2.3. Conclusions

The Radio Islam topic is extensively covered by debate and leading articles, columns and news reports in different sections and involves not only journalists but also experts from politics, scholars and writers. Using the distinctions in the contributions, I would like to condense the message as follows: Ahmed Rami coming from the outside is, as an active Islamist immigrant, dangerous. Therefore, he as a person is excluded from the discourse of the mainstream media. His supposed defenders are public persons who stand for subtle anti-Semitism in society. They can be criticized, and run the risk of being excluded from different concerns. With reference to Rami, Sweden is a changed society, where the political system acts wrongly, the legal system acts slowly, the Internet is out of control and community radio stirs up hatred. There are bad news items that can be treated again and again.

The thematization of this topic has the special function of clarifying the boundaries of the communication, and it simultaneously controls what can follow as further communication and what cannot. The topic meets significant selection criteria because it is the incarnation of bad news. It offers conflicts and norm violations that have the benefit of opening up for connecting communication, and thus suits the needs of the media. These are topics that can be repeated continually like moral violation, insufficient education and laws, as well as the slowness of authorities. The assumed public interest ensures that these topics are accepted. The topics are also embedded in the expectations of the recipients, or in other words: they refer to the common-sense knowledge of the recipients. And this refers to the symbolic order of society. Seeking recursions to the Rami topic fulfils an important function of the media:
Rami/Radio Islam functions as a sort of key event (Kepplinger et al., 1995) because of its precisely stated meaning. The event can therefore be revived and narrated in connection with different contexts that can continue to be narrated.

Selection also means exclusion: The topics brought up by Radio Islam itself are not selected as information (at least not in those contributions that refer to Radio Islam or/and Ahmed Rami), but the critical opinions about the arguments contained in the programmes of Radio Islam are selected. Radio Islam’s arguments are classified as anti-Semitic and therefore no spillover effect takes place. Because of the clear negative judgment of his role and the symbolic power connected with his opinion, Rami himself receives no entrance into the public discourse in the established press media. Arguing with Luhmann, the different codes are not sufficient in order to be “understood”. Rami does not have the common-sense knowledge, and his participation in communication within the daily press is not possible. If the Palestine conflict is debated, the media avoid referring to him.
3. Case study: AYPA-TV

In comparison with the Rami communication, this topic is different: Firstly, the communication here is concentrated mainly to newspapers located in Berlin; secondly, the general topic is rather a positive one; and thirdly, it receives only marginal attention.

3.1. Background

AYPA-TV is a local German-Turkish TV station in Berlin, founded in February 1993 and driven by only two people: German translator and journalist Claudia Dantschke and Turkish translator and journalist Ali Yildirim. Yildirim was born in Istanbul and has lived in Berlin since 1970. He is trained in print engineering, was branch manager of the Turkish daily newspaper Milliyet, and does translation work for the courts. He is familiar with the Turkish minority and has over 45 years’ experience with the (West) German majority society. Dantschke was born in Leipzig in the former GDR, has studied French and Arabic, and worked for the East German news agency ADN before the fall of the Wall. She is thus familiar with the majority society as a whole and the East German part in particular. In the interview (March 2005), both expressed that they enjoy this combination, which helps to expand their viewpoints and contacts. Simultaneously, they have as their base a common-sense knowledge, which makes connecting communication easier. This helps to open doors, not least through their command of the respective languages and cultural codes.

From 1993 to 1999, the TV station transmitted a daily one-hour programme, mainly in German, on the local commercial cable channel Spreekanal that was financed by the editors themselves, private donations and advertisements. Their guiding maxim was: “The German-
Turkish mirror of Berlin for all who want to be more tolerant” 44 (ND 021018). To support the TV station financially, viewers founded an association in May 1995. However, the company’s finances were not very healthy, and the TV station could only continue with sporadically produced programmes after 1999. In November 2004, the editors were forced to interrupt the broadcast and switch to the Internet, which is now the main channel for spreading information and programmes. 45

On the motivation of doing ”video journalism” 46, they expressed in the interview that they want to perform investigative journalism and show different viewpoints about the Turkish minority and report better on the Turkish community than the mainstream media do. They aim at addressing counter-issues that are not on the agenda of the mainstream media. According to AYP A, this requires a different kind of organization, meaning an independent and self-ruled one whose two members are responsible for their own work. This gives freedom, but also restriction. According to the editors, they exclude topics treating extreme terrorism because this would fall within the interest field of the federal agency for internal security (Verfassungsschutz), which would result in policing and therefore in a loss of independence. So, they select information dealing with the everyday life of the Turkish minority, that is with topics that are accessible through ”normal” journalistic investigation (Interview 2005). They cannot live on making TV alone, but thanks to their main jobs they can produce the programmes. The producers see this as a kind of independence: They are not dependent on the revenues from their programmes.

As mentioned above, AYP A-TV supplies the mainstream media with information that is not on the media agenda. The station became known through a programme on the Turkish minority (the Alevi s) who were oppressed in Turkey 47, and through topics dealing with political Islam,

44 ”Deutsch-türkischer Berlin-Spiegel für alle, die toleranter sein wollen”.
45 Since 1996, AYP A has been present on the Internet at www.aypa-tv.de.
46 Interview, March 2005; they called themselves “Videojournalisten” in German, which means doing TV programmes without using extra personnel for shooting and editing.
47 In July 1993, the confrontations with the local Sunnis escalated when 37 people taking part in a cultural festival of the Alevi s lost their lives in the Anatolian city of
especially concerning the association between the Islamic Association in Berlin (*Islamische Föderation Berlin, IFB*) and the extreme organization *Milli Görüs*. This association is especially delicate, because the IFB has had the right to teach religion in the schools of Berlin since 1998. The treatment of these topics has resulted in various trials, initiated by the Islamic Association.

The media becoming aware of *AYPA* was also connected with *AYPA’s* presence at press conferences as a supposed Turkish TV (Interview 2005). The video journalists thus joined the professionals and self-confidently took on the role of journalists, asking critical and competent questions. In the beginning their journalist colleagues brushed them aside as hobby TV, reported *Dantschke* in the interview (2005). However, politicians were more open to *AYPA*, since they saw a chance to directly reach the Turkish population with their messages. The label of being German-Turkish television has helped them attract attention from politicians, which in turn has helped them gain more acceptance from their journalist colleagues in the mainstream media (Interview 2005). Another positive aspect is that *AYPA-TV* was not distributed via the Open Channel (an amateur channel has the reputation of being a channel for all and nothing) but was instead distributed via the professional *Spreekanal*. Though they broadcast from a living room and did not have their own studio, they did not want to see themselves placed with the folklore programmes of local associations. They did not want to play in the “amateur league” (*taz* 970812), but rather see themselves as journalists who want to be taken seriously and who aim at influencing the public discourse. It took some years to prove that *AYPA-TV* was better than its reputation. It succeeded through the continuous proof of expert knowledge, so that gradually, the video journalists have made a name for themselves.

After 12 years of broadcasting, the station has garnered a reputation as a serious information source, and the established media now select information from *AYPA*. A spill over effect of issues brought up by *AYPA-TV* has occurred. For example, they took part in a programme on

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Sivas. The German mainstream media showed interest in finding out more about the conflict.
the news report *Kontraste* on the public service television channel *ZDF*. In the interview (2005), the editors tell how the mainstream media previously copied information from AYPAA without mentioning its origin. In time, *AYPA-TV* has become a name and can sell exclusive photos or motion pictures, and issues are brought up that initially came from *AYPA-TV*. Both editors are also active as book authors48 and as freelance journalists for the left liberal daily *taz*.

### 3.2. The selected topics of the newspapers

What topics are selected by the mainstream media when they refer to *AYPA-TV*? Here, contributions on two main topics emerge. On the one hand, it is the topic of media production as such, that is about its more exotic status, and the alternative media/mainstream media distinction is drawn. Two people broadcast television from a living room, and one can take it seriously. The mainstream journalists are fascinated by this, and one-third of the contributions deal with this topic. The other contributions treat issues brought up by *AYPA-TV* that generally circle on the Turkish community in Berlin and its relationship to Turkey, and those issues that *AYPA* is directly influenced by such as the media situation and media politics.

#### 3.2.1. “The smallest TV station in the world”

We know from the Rami example that the alternative/community media do not belong to the preferred environment of the majority media, and something extraordinary has to happen for an item to be selected as information by the mainstream media. We know also from the Rami example that support or attention from other social systems can make the entrance into mainstream media much easier. Like in the case of Rami, the TV station was undergoing several trials for defamation, how-

ever with the difference that its members were acquitted and that they had been accused by a minority group. But unlike with Rami, these events were communicated only marginally in the mainstream media. Important to the media is rather the actual fact that two people make television with a stronger commitment under extraordinary circumstances and address topics that fit the canon of the mainstream media. The broadcaster has also received support from an established newspaper, the left liberal *taz*. Most of its contributions appear in this newspaper.

Consistent with Luhmann’s theory, topics have to fulfil certain criteria in order to be communicated. The function of contributions treating the alternative media/mainstream media distinction consists of serving the expected interest of the viewers in extraordinary information. The daily *taz* began in 1995 with the first contributions, and seven years later the other newspapers – almost simultaneously – followed. Why an accumulation of these contributions occurred in 2002 is hard to determine. It is possible that an article (with photo) about *AYPA-TV* in the cultural section of the national and prestigious *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ 020422) caused a spill over effect to other newspapers.

The contributions within the first topic have several sub-topics, which will be dealt with in the following subsections:

- Description of the members of *AYPA-TV*
- Description of the working conditions
- Description of the programmes and reception.

### 3.2.2. “A mobile task force”

It is notable that the descriptions of the members of the TV station take up a great deal of space, especially regarding their outward appearances, biographical backgrounds and working conditions. The concentration on these soft topics intensifies, on the one hand, the entertainment character and, on the other, the dramatization of the contribution, because the precarious production conditions stand in contrast to the investigative journalism that the TV owner has in mind.
The description of the TV operators focuses on the distinction between a ‘normal’ journalist team and the one described. Paragraphs accentuate the AYPA team’s eagerness to work and AYPA’s devotion. As regards semantics, we apparently have to do this with extreme phrases. Some examples: Like drug addicts they are addicted to their jobs; they are ambitious TV junkies\(^{49}\) (taz 950523). The adjective ‘ambitious’ (German ‘ambitioniert’) gives a TV junkie a positive connotation. Another contribution also emphasizes their eagerness in their work: “[…] They are passionate even if they work under economic constraints”\(^{50}\) (FAZ 020422). Once dedicated to this passion, in spite of economic constraints they would not be put off. They are also described as two maniacs\(^{51}\) who keep a small miracle alive\(^{52}\) (taz 950523), namely AYPA. Also here, the negative term ‘maniac’ is turned into a positive one, because if one keeps a miracle alive one can also achieve great things.

Editor Yildirim “is starved for an enlightened, laicized journalism”\(^{53}\) (taz 950523), that is, an urge coming from the innermost part of the body, genuine and needing to be satisfied, which illustrates the urgency and authenticity of his concern. They work for their inner urge. Therefore they work everywhere, which is expressed in the term “mobile task force”\(^{54}\) (taz 950523), referring to military discourse. This reference is associated with strength as well as force.

\(^{49}\) “ambitionierte Fernsehjunkies”
\(^{50}\) “im Dienste einer Leidenschaft ohne Rücksicht auf ökonomische Zwänge [stellen]”
\(^{51}\) “zwei Besessene”.
\(^{52}\) “kleines Wunder”.
\(^{53}\) “ist hungrig nach einem aufgeklärten, laizistischen Journalismus”.
\(^{54}\) “mobiles Einsatzkommando”.

60
Für Zapper, die hängenbleiben

Trotz Finanzsorgen ist „Appy TV“ immer dabei, wenn es um das türkische Leben in Berlin geht.


Werbekunden gesucht


Eine Stunde Freunde liebevoll sendete Appy von 1993 bis 1999 im Spreewald. „Dann wurden wir vernünftig“, sagt Ali Yildirim und lächelt. 150.000 Mark Schulden liegt dem deshalb schon


Mehr Toleranz fordert Appy TV dabei keineswegs nur von den Deutschen. Dantschke und Yildirim sind stolz darauf, daß sie als „erste überhaupt im türkischen Fernsehen“ 1993 über die bis dato toterlebene Minderheit der Aleviten berichten. Anders als ihre große Konkurrentin, die türkische Berliner Lokalzeitung TD1, die rund um die Uhr sendet, möchten sie keine „Schlomatterberichterstattung“ betreiben.

Wachsende Sensibilität


Both members are also described as a kind of a strange team:

She is younger, wears jeans and a loose T-shirt. [He is] a neat, older man with a gentle voice and a reserved look.55 (FR 020819)

This description refers to their appearances: She is younger and dresses casually (almost too casually), and he is older, wears a suit, and maintains a low profile. AYPAl editor Dantschke is quoted in a contribution:

Ali Yildrim is conscientious, almost pedantic. I have a good organizing ability, occasionally I am a little hectic, but I am not afraid to reach out to the people with the camera in my hand.56 (ND 021018)

They are a team, which is complementary: Yildirim is almost pedantic and Dantschke is an organizational talent, and is not shy to handle the camera. Dantschke is quoted in another contribution: “If we were similar to each other, it wouldn’t work so well”57 (FR 020819). The contrasts between the two members are positive because they promote creativity and make for a perfect team.

This TV station is significantly different from mainstream TV, which is obvious in the choice of the words used to describe the video journalists: They are passionate workers, almost too passionate because they act like addicts or maniacs. This is abnormal and is why it is worth reporting. However, they do not stand outside society’s majority, because Yildirim is given the title (in the headline of the article) of a sort of “Turkish Bednarz” (SZ 020611), which reminds the reader of the former TV reporter with the public service company ARD, Klaus Bednarz, who went down in TV history as a critical TV journalist. The AYPAl-TV team is different, but positively different – remarkable, colourful, extraordinary or fascinating. They try something very different and seem to succeed:

55 “Sie ist jünger, trägt Jeans und Schlabber –T-Shirt. [Er ist] ein adretter, älterer Mann mit sanfter Stimme und zurückhaltendem Blick”.
56 “Ali Yildirim ist gewissenhaft, fast pedantisch. Ich habe ein gutes Organisationstalent, bin zuweilen etwas hektisch, habe aber keine Scheu mit der Kamera auf die Leute zuzugehen”.
57 “Wenn wir uns beide ähnlich wären, dann würde es nicht so gut klappen”.

62
Everyday, the telephone rings at AYPA; ZDF journalists want to be informed about the Alevites, an NTV-journalist would like to know what the atmosphere is like among Berlin Turks, and another wants quick - and of course free of charge - appointments and contacts with fundamentalist groups.58 (taz 950523)

As early as in 1995, the left liberal newspaper *taz* claimed that AYPA had become known across the nation. By contrast, the conservative national *FAZ* writes more modestly that AYPA-TV has become an institution in the Turkish life of the city of Berlin (FAZ 020422). When they began broadcasting, they were outsiders. According to *taz*, in time they have attained a place in the inner-social environment of the mainstream media, which in turn take notice of them. Mainstream journalists benefit from them: They call them every day to get information and to gain contact with fundamentalist groups. It can be read that *AYPA-TV* reports most competently about German-Turkish life (taz 950523). In line with a common journalistic style, this article from 1995 is written with the help of superlatives and exaggerations, which is supposed to increase the relevance of the contribution and at the same time promote and attract attention to the TV station. As mentioned above, *taz* has paid attention to the TV station from the beginning; especially the journalist of this article, Eberhard Seidel-Pielen, has worked on co-operative projects with AYPA, such as a book (see footnote 48).

### 3.2.3. Compact working and living

In addition to the team description, contributions about *AYPA-TV* show an extensive interest in examining the working conditions there because they differ from the norm. This description aims to point out the otherness. In a high-tech nation such as Germany, there are two TV operators who broadcast TV programmes with the help of simple techniques (taz 990227). Here, the unpretentious technological equipment contrasts with the high technology of a nation, which marks something exotic.

58 “Täglich klingelt bei AYPA das Telefon, lassen sich ZDF-Journalisten über die Alewiten informieren, möchte ein ntv-Mitarbeiter wissen, wie denn so die Stimmung unter Berliner Türken sei, und ein dritter will schnell und natürlich kostenlos Termine und Kontakte in fundamentalistische Kreise”. 
Some contributions note and comment on every corresponding detail, beginning even with the location:

In spite of a very central location, the economy did not kiss the street as others awake. The boom has not taken place here, but where the big television broadcast stations built their mirror-glazed capital studios. That is the new world. In a back yard of the old world, AYPA-TV is situated.59 (FR 020819)

This short paragraph contains a main distinction between the old and new worlds by constructing clear binaries in the sentences: In spite of having the best location in the centre of Berlin, the broadcaster is situated on a street that is empty, where the shops have gone bankrupt, and the economic boom has not taken place. In the new world (after the fall of the Wall) that is experiencing an economic boom, the national TV stations have built their glazed TV studios; but in the old world, there is a little TV station in the back yard, AYPA-TV. The binaries are obvious: economic boom/stagnation, and backyard TV station/glazed TV stations. A backyard TV station in the old world has to resist the new world, with its economic boom and modern TV studios. This is distinctive and worth paying attention to.

Almost two months later, the former communist newspaper Neues Deutschland notes that the grey facade of the backyard house has been painted, that the new world has come to the old:

The formerly grey facade was reconstructed and painted in a friendly candy-like shade. The big television broadcasting stations with their newly opened capital studios are easily reached from here by foot. However, in the back yard of the old Berlin apartment house, there is also produced TV: Aypa-TV.60 (ND 021018)

59 “Obwohl Bestlage Berlin-Mitte, hat die Wirtschaft die Straße nicht wie andere wachgeküsst. Der Boom ist vorbeigehyp; dorthin, wo die großen Fernsehsender ihre spiegelverglasten Hauptstadtstudios bauten. Das ist in der neuen Welt. In einem Hinterhof der alten Welt liegt Aypa TV”.
In line with the contribution above, the journalist constructs the same binaries in this article. AYPATV is related to the modern, newly opened capital studios of the large TV companies. They are located in the same municipal district, within walking distance. But they do not have so much in common. This distinction allows the elaboration on the otherness: This is the smallest TV station, and professional programming is done in cramped surroundings. AYPATV is also called a “mini-broadcaster” (FR 020819). There is no large, roomy, glazed TV studio. Some contributions claim that AYPATV is even mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records as the smallest TV station in the world (e.g., taz 990227). Welt am Sonntag emphasizes the compact living and working conditions: The living room is the technique room, the hall the archive, the little hand camera the only equipment (03039). During broadcast, the table and sofa are pushed aside, and Dantschke’s living room is transformed into a studio:

Being on air means that Claudia’s living room is converted into a studio, production control or editing room. Table and sofa are brushed aside, and the job can begin.61 (ND 021018)

The video journalists are flexible, and make use of their own private rooms. Another article illustrates the studio in more detail:

[a] room in a private apartment in the centre of Berlin, equipped with a mixing console and four video recorders, a single functioning camera and a shabby sofa.62 (taz 990227)

AYPA cannot afford its own studio; one editor more or less lives there, and only one camera is working. The working conditions are similar to amateur TV; the technical equipment is insufficient and vulnerable. The

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61 “Geht es auf Sendung, dann wird das Wohnzimmer von Claudia zum Studio, Regieraum oder Schnittplatz umfunktioniert. Tisch und Sofa werden beiseite geschoben, und schon kann die Arbeit beginnen”.
62 “[ein] Zimmer in einer Privatwohnung in Mitte, ausgestattet mit Mischpult und vier Videorekordern, einer einzigen funktionierenden Kamera und einem abgewetzten Sofa.”
living conditions are not better: The sofa shows signs of age. Here, money is not crucial for conducting TV journalism.

Some contributions describe the furniture of the living room in detail. An example: The two-room flat of Claudia Dantschke has not changed in spite of the "new world": It is a mixture of dissident lodging and girl’s room. Yellowed Reclam\textsuperscript{63} books are on the bookshelves, and stuffed toys like Mickey Mouse and a gorilla squat on the brown sofa (FAZ 020422). This room seems not to be one of a professional journalist but rather of a person who has not grown up, or of someone who is not interested in decor. In the context of the article, a parallel is drawn to the “Ossis”\textsuperscript{64}: Dantschke is from the East, which distinguishes her from the West. She still has an East German lease. Here comes the explanation; she is from the East, and East German living rooms look like this. Furthermore, she works with a Turk, who belongs to a minority group in Germany, which is not so different from the East Germans, according to the article: “East Germans and Turks are – for Dantschke – two groups who are not very far from each other.”\textsuperscript{65} (FAZ 020422). The “Ossis” (East Germans) and Turks are in the same boat. They are different, at least from a "normal", that is mainstream media, point of view. Here, the East/West distinction is drawn, implying: The East is different, the West is normal.

Dantschke probably has no time for decorating. An article by taz does not spend time on decoration matters, but instead on the high working intensity of the team. During her unemployment, the female team member voluntarily works as editor, cutter and cameraman, and her colleague works as translator in the morning and as manager and editor in the afternoon (taz 970812). They work under permanent financial pressure:

And Yildrim talks about the price for his journalistic passion: at the moment only half of the monthly standing expenses comes from advertising. That means 15.000 marks. "The rest, I finance through my job as a interpreter and through

\textsuperscript{63} A former East German publishing house.
\textsuperscript{64} Nickname for the East Germans.
\textsuperscript{65} “Ossis und Türken – für Dantschke sind die beiden Gruppen gar nicht so weit voneinander entfernt”.
courses at adult evening classes." [...] Also for Dantschke that passion takes its toll: the vice chief editor lost seventeen kilos because of continuous stress over the last two years. Luckily, she is financially secure. She lives on unemployment benefit.66 (taz 950523)

As early as in 1995, the video journalists put their own money and/or working power into the broadcaster because only 50 percent of the costs are covered by advertising revenue. The sarcasm of the last two sentences is clear: Claudia Dantschke has lost 17 kilos because of permanent stress, but she is financially secured thanks to her unemployment benefit. The reference to the unemployment benefit intensifies the awkward situation; it is a question of survival, and time will tell how long the

66 "Und Yildirim nennt den Preis seiner journalistischen Leidenschaft: Lediglich die Hälfte der monatlichen Fixkosten in Höhe von 15.000 Mark werden augenblicklich durch Werbeeinnahmen eingespielt. 'Den Rest finanziere ich durch meine Dolmetschertätigkeit und durch Kurse, die ich an der Volkshochschule gebe.' [...] Auch Dantschke zahlt ihren Tribut: Siebzig Kilo hat die stellvertretende Chefredakteurin durch den Dauerstress der letzten beiden Jahre verloren. Glücklicherweise ist sie finanziell abgesichert. Sie lebt vom Arbeitslosengeld."
broadcaster can survive. Over time, Yildirim has gotten into debt, noted by Frankfurter Rundschau (020819).

In line with the other sub-topics, extreme binaries are elaborated: The broadcaster is struggling for survival. It is located in the centre of Berlin, yet in the back yard. It has no mirror-glazed studio, but rather a mixing console in the living room. It has no employed personnel, but volunteer workaholics. The broadcaster is a miracle thus far. The dramatization of its contributions is built on these binaries, which simultaneously mark the difference of the TV station as well as its future. In describing the other side of the distinction in such a dominant way, the future of AYPA is marked: This little TV station will not survive; it is only a matter of time until it has to stop broadcasting.

3.2.4. TV programme and reception

If contributions make statements about the programme, it is typical that they quote the TV operators. The AYPA team itself has to tell what the programme is about and who watches it. This has the function of giving ‘objective’ information about the programme as well as its reception and simultaneously marking that the information is coming from the operators. Unlike the description of the working conditions and team members, there is an attempt to make the phrasing appear unbiased. The journalist seems to have no experience of his/her own with the programme. There are only a few articles that make a judgment of the programme, and these judge in a similar way. It is obvious that the journalists copy from each other; quotations are repeated, descriptions are similar.

Descriptions include information on where and when the programme is broadcast. The editor Dantschke is quoted as saying that the whole city of Berlin is their studio. She states that they make a virtue of necessity: Because they have no studio of their own, they conduct interviews at the places where people are. This quotation also expresses that the video journalists are near the people, know their problems and make authentic programmes.
While the SFB comes with an entire crew, Claudia Dantschke holds only her camera at eye level. TV can be that simple and close to the people.67 (Welt am Sonntag 030309)

In contrast to the public service TV stations that conduct research from the desk and bring an entire crew to film an event, Dantschke uses only her hand camera to shoot the same event. AYP A does not need complicated techniques to do their work. The tenor is: AYP A’s programme is authentic.

The description of the programme is combined with information about its aim:

AYPA’s TV programme is mainly in German: ‘We want to show also the Germans what is discussed among the Turks, the Kurds and the Muslims anyway,’ Yildirim says. ‘We have to create transparency between the cultures and groups’.68 (taz 990227)

Here, the editor Yildirim expresses the need for more transparency between the groups of Germans and Turks. Programmes mainly in German (80%) that inform about the Turkish minority can help the groups understand each other. In the same article, the broadcaster is called a small “‘multi-culti’ station” that is not an advocate for a special group – neither the Turkish, Kurds nor Germans; Dantschke explains this in the following quote:

‘For the political Islamists, we are too secular, for the nationalists we are too democratic, and for the democratic interest associations we are too critical’.69 (taz 990227)

67 “Wenn der SFB mit einer ganzen Crew abrückt, hält Claudia Dantschke nur ihre Kamera in Augenhöhe. So einfach kann TV sein und so nah dran”.
68 “Das Programm sendet AYPA-TV überwiegend in deutscher Sprache: ’Wir wollen auch den Deutschen verständlich machen, was in der Welt der Türken, der Kurden und des Islam überhaupt diskutiert wird’, sagt Yildirim. ’Es muss Transparenz zwischen den Kulturen und Gruppen geschaffen werden’”.
69 “Für die politischen Islamisten sind wir zu laizistisch, für die Nationalisten sind wir zu demokratisch, für die demokratischen Interessenverbände sind wir zu kritisch’”.

AYPA cannot be monopolized because all different groups have their own interests and the journalists are above those kinds of interests. This implies independence and objective reporting, and that reliable information is broadcast to the public. Unlike this statement, the liberal Frankfurter Rundschau places the programme on the centre-left wing side, based on the aim of the video journalists (FR 020819). The conservative Welt am Sonntag describes the programme as a counter-public sphere to the superiority of the nationally and nationally coloured Turkish mass-circulation papers and electronic media:

Yildirim wants to counter this “propaganda” (Yildirim) with an investigative and, above all, a liberal and undogmatic journalism.70 (Welt am Sonntag 030309)

Here, the contribution focuses on the Turkish yellow press as a counterpart that is nationalistic and biased, and supports the ruling power. AYPA wants to resist this kind of communication with investigative journalism: “It is the fight of David against a whole army of Goliaths”71 (Welt am Sonntag 030309). The binary of “David against Goliath” is constructed. Applying the story from the Old Testament, does this mean that Goliath, i.e. the Turkish media, will terrorize the people until he is killed by David, i.e. AYPA? The Turkish media are depicted as the villains and AYPA as the honest one. Other contributions explain more distinctly who the villains are: For example, the German-Turkish cable TV station TD-1 is dominant and

would exclusively represent the interests of the Turkish government and convey an exaggerated national consciousness. AYPA-TV, however, would with its programmes attempt to break the isolation of the Turks.72 (taz 970423)

Dantschke is quoted indirectly, labelling TD-1 as a nationalistic broadcasting company closely linked to the Turkish government that contrib-

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70 “Dieser ‘Hofberichterstattung’ (Yildirim) will man einen investigativen, vor allem aber liberalen und undogmatischen Journalismus entgegensetzen.”
71 “Es ist der Kampf Davids gegen eine ganze Armee von Goliaths”.
72 “vertrete ausschliesslich die Interessen der türkischen Regierung und vermittle ein übersteigertes Nationalbewusstsein. AYPA-TV würde jedoch versuchen, mit seinen Sendungen die Isolierung der Türken aufzubrechen”.

70
utes to isolating the Turkish community. In contrast, the aim of AYPA is to break this isolation. AYPA is opposed to TD-1 and plays an integrative role by acting as a “communication bridge” between the cultures, which is stressed in a left-wing newspaper (ND 021018).

As mentioned above, statements about the programme are indirect quotes by the AYPA members. They reproduce the aim of the sender by marking clearly that it is AYPA’s opinion. In so doing, the contributions mark distance. There are some exceptions, especially in taz:

AYPA-TV keeps a sharp eye on the officials of the Turkish community. Some officials prefer to decline an interview to being asked critical questions.73 (taz 970812)

It is stated that AYPA is critical TV, and that some officials in the Turkish community cancel an interview to avoid being asked sharp questions by the video journalists. This message is stated as fact, implying that the video journalists are well informed and that their questions hit the nail on the head. An article in Berliner Zeitung refers directly to a programme by AYPA as a kind of announcement: “The interview will be broadcast tonight” (BZ 961217). It is an interview with a top official in the controversial organization Milli Görüs. AYPA appears as a reliable source of information as well as the only one that can deliver this kind of exclusive stories.

As mentioned above, only few contributions judge the programme, and if judgments are made they are similar to each other. It begins with the motto of the TV station74, which is described on the one hand as ambitious but on the other hand as long-winded (FR 020819). The AYPA team is ambitious, but the professional standard of their programmes is not very high:

Sometimes the programme is a little rough, but it is always very committed.75
(Welt am Sonntag 030309)

73 “Den Funktionären der türkischen Gemeinschaft schaut AYPA-TV kritisch auf die Finger. So mancher sagt ein Interview lieber ab, als sich die bohrenden Fragen zu stellen”.
74 “Deutsch-Türkischer Berlin-Spiegel für alle, die toleranter sein wollen”.
75 “Gelegentlich kommt all das ein wenig spröde daher, aber stets sehr engagiert”.

71
Here, the binary is constructed: The editors of AYPA are very involved in the topic, but are not the best at producing professional programmes. The programmes sometimes seem a little “rough”. Another contribution expresses that the moderation is like a presentation at a university seminar. Through endless sentences, the presenter tries to give as much information as possible:

The presentation, always spoken by Claudia Dantschke in German, often reminds one of a university lecture with pictures: in endless sentences a maximum of information is offered to the viewer. [...] The strength of the programme is the documentary [...] the programme [...] is not easily digestible.76 (FAZ 020422)

The strength of the programme is its authenticity, and genuine information is delivered. But its form is not professional, which results in difficulties understanding the content, which is “not easily digestible”. The contributions draw a distinction between being an expert on a topic and being a professional in producing programmes. The editors of AYPA are experts on topics rather than professional TV journalists. With this distinction in mind, AYPA is grouped with amateur TV.

Regarding the programme, the daily taz draws a different distinction, relating it to the audience and distinguishing between the viewers: For the hurried TV viewer the programme is impossible to digest, but for the interested viewer AYPA’s programme is the best information source about German-Turkish life in Berlin:

For the hurried television viewer the program is heavy, sometimes unpalatable stuff; for the interested one, it is one of the best information sources about the German-Turkish relations in Berlin.77 (taz 980307)

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76 “Denn die Moderation, stets auf deutsch von Claudia Dantschke gesprochen, erinnert häufig an einen mit Bildern unterlegten Vortrag in einem Universitätsseminar: In atemlosen Bandwurmsätzen soll dem Zuschauer ein Höchstmass an Information vermittelt werden [...] Die Stärke des Programms liegt im Dokumentarischen [...]das Programm [ist] nicht gerade [eine] leicht verdauliche [...] Kost”.
77 “Für den eiligen Fernsehzuschauer ist das Sendeprofil schwere, manchmal unge- niessbare Kost, für den Interessierten eine der besten Informationsquellen über das deutsch-türkische Zusammenleben in Berlin.”
Only an interested audience can benefit from the programme. It does not reach all viewers but rather a certain especially interested group. While *taz* draws the distinction between interested viewer and uninterested viewer, the other newspaper focuses on the distinction between the content and form. The content is good, but the form is poor. The latter distinction clearly marks the difference between mainstream and alternative/minority media: The concern of the minority media might be good but its realization is unprofessional.

Statements about the audience are based on judgements of the programme. Because *FAZ* regards it as a heavy-going programme, it is assumed that more Germans than Turks watch it. This information is also confirmed by the editors (*FAZ* 020422). This implies that Turks would rather watch light programmes. A passage describes the group of Germans watching *AYPA*:

> [...] particularly those who are privately and officially interested in Germans and Turks living together. They are employees of foundations, or journalists, or people who zap and stop if they watch a local celebrity.78 (*FAZ* 020422)

It seems to be a business matter to watch; or, one watches if one recognizes a local figure. The daily *FR*, which has not judged the programme, describes its viewers in more general and unbiased terms, stating that they consist of Turks and people of Arabic background who understand German. The daily does not mention German viewers at all:

Because more than two thirds of the program are broadcast in German, *AYPA-TV* does not only have Turkish fans. Also many people of Arabian origin, who speak German, join in.79 (*FR* 020819)

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78 “ [...] vor allem solche, die persönlich oder beruflich am Zusammenleben von Deutschen und Türken interessiert sind: Mitarbeiter von Stiftungen oder Journalisten, Zapper, die hängen bleiben, wenn sie eine lokale Grösse sehen.”

79 “Weil gut zwei Drittel der Beiträge in deutscher Sprache gesendet werden, hat *AYPA TV* nicht nur türkische Fans. Auch viele Menschen arabischer Herkunft mit Deutschkenntnissen schalten sich ein”.
Taz admits that the interest of the Germans is limited, and that viewers are second-generation immigrants with both feet firmly on the ground in Berlin:

The interest of the Germans is limited. It is represented by a small, but grateful public from the second generation who has both feet firmly planted in Berlin.\(^80\)
(taz 980307)

Regarding the viewers, the daily FAZ draws a general distinction between those who have a special interest in watching the programme because of job matters or local celebrity information and those who do not have any interest in these kinds of topics; the latter do not watch AYPa. The daily taz prefers the migrant/local distinction: It is a broadcaster that addresses intercultural questions and seems to reach those who feel that they are affected by such questions. The locals, i.e. Germans, seem not to be affected by such topics, and do not watch the programme.

Summarizing the distinctions used to describe the TV station, we can note that they often contain binary distinctions. These binaries consist of two opposite parts, which are clearly mentioned: flashy TV studios/TV equipment in the living room, a whole TV crew/one hand camera, etc. These kinds of constructions have the function of elaborating the otherness of AYPa: It is different and beyond the norm, whereas the studios and working conditions of the mainstream media are the norm. Simultaneously, such descriptions of AYPa fix the station’s future as one that will not survive. But this information is not enough to be communicated in the mainstream media. There are many other TV stations, broadcasting mainly on the Open Channel, that are different and have a short running period. AYPa also produces ambitious, critical programmes on topics that are of interest in politics. This seems distinctive and is therefore worth communicating. How it is communicated, however, depends on the narrative of the article and is not constructed in the above-mentioned binaries but rather as distinctions in which the other side is

\(^80\) “Das Interesse der Deutschen hält sich in Grenzen. So bleibt ein kleines, aber dankbares Publikum aus der zweiten Generation, das mit beiden Beinen in Berlin steht”.

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not mentioned. The side that is mentioned is described as a niche format, even an unprofessional style of programming, and viewers are said to consist of niche groups. The unmarked side of the distinction consists of the programmes of the mainstream media. Also here in the context of media production, the contributions look at AYPA from the viewpoint of the mainstream TV stations and not, for example, from the angle of the working conditions or of other alternative media organizations. The contributions offer their own media production as an example and judge AYPA’s media production from this perspective. Only a few contributions review the programmes, focussing on its unprofessional form in contrast to an ambitious content. This is a common judgement of alternative media production and is nothing new, and with this the topic of describing AYPA is exhausted. But there are other issues brought up by AYPA’s treatment in the media, which are discussed in the next section.

3.2.5. About Berlin cable network

Topics in the mainstream media arise from the treatment of AYPA’s media production as such and are directly connected to the AYPA station: The main topic concerns media politics as well as media competition. Other topics are about issues brought up by AYPA, and circle around fundamentalist tendencies in the Turkish community and German-Turkish life, including relation to Turkey and events in Turkey. Contributions reach the social fields of politics, economics and law, and even questions of the climate in society such as racism. I want to examine the function of AYPA in the context of these topics.

The media environment of the AYPA station in Berlin’s cable network is a topic that gives rise to connecting communication. Contributions focus mainly on the Turkish media stations in the cable network of Berlin and claim that the Turkish community lives an isolated media life through watching these programmes because they are produced in Istanbul and Ankara and have only a loose connection to Berlin. One exception is mentioned, namely AYPA (taz 950509). In this context, AYPA is treated as the only station that can counteract isolation. Through this binary (AYPA/Turkish TV stations on the cable net),
AYPA appears in a positive light and the others in a negative one. The relevance of AYPA is strengthened when treating the information that even some of the Turkish broadcasting companies broadcast warmongering, such as TRT-INT, which seems to be close to the Turkish government and appears to promote the invasion of Northern Iraq. In the context of this utterance, Dantschke and Yildirim are quoted by the German-Turkish local TV station as expressing that there are “worse things on the cable net” that go unnoticed by the media authority (Medienanstalt) (taz 950429). The AYPA team is acting as an expert who knows what is going on in the Turkish media on the local cable net. With the help of this statement, connecting communication occurs regarding the role and responsibility of the media authority.

Another topic arises in connection with the scale of fees of the cable channel Spreekanal, where AYPA broadcasts. It is a fee scale that places all small stations such as AYPA at a disadvantage. Dantschke is quoted as saying that her station has to pay twenty times the amount of the fee per sending hour compared to the full-time programme of TD-1. This kind of discrimination is increased through the following binary: TD-1 provides an exaggerated national identity and does not need to pay as much. AYPA reduces the isolation of the Turkish community and has to pay much more for a broadcast hour (taz 970423). The tenor is that AYPA belongs to the disadvantaged TV stations because of an incorrect media policy. Connecting communication occurs around a media policy that allows this kind of discrimination (taz 970812).

3.2.6. Legal proceedings against AYPA-TV

Most contributions occur in 2002, and this topic is not yet exhausted due to new and ongoing trials. The Islamic Federation of Berlin (IFB) has accused AYPA and others of defamation. This information was selected by different newspapers because not only AYPA but also other media organizations, such as the dailies Tagesspiegel, Berliner Morgenpost, the public service TV company (ZDF) and several individuals (such as a member of the European Parliament and a taz journalist) were accused. Contributions in the press media treating this topic refer
mainly to the book *Politik im Namen Allahs*, edited by the AYPA team, instead of AYPA’s TV programmes; this is not very surprising, however, because the programmes are hardly watched. The editors of the book claim that the The Islamic Federation of Berlin (IFB), especially the Islam Kolleg, is a cover organization for the Islamists, and that there is a connection between the IFB and the fundamentalist organization Milli Görüş, which has been placed under guard by the federal agency for internal security (*Verfassungsschutz*). At the same time, the IFB has the right to hold classes in religion at Berlin schools, financed with tax money. Especially after 9/11, this topic has attracted media attention and has also generated attention to AYPA. Referring to AYPA and the various trials, the binary of the small against the bif is constructed:

The living-room journalists also won the trial ‘Islamic confederation versus Ali Yildirim’. Yildirim can continue to spread his claims among the people. The smallest broadcaster of the world was again very big.81 (SZ 020611)

In the trial, AYPA was cleared of defamation and can continue to claim this connection to Islamists. ”The smallest broadcaster in the world” has won against a large organization, and the smallest broadcaster is being taken seriously, as stated by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (020611).

Being involved in legal proceedings because of investigative and enlightened journalism is another topic that has resulted from the reporting on the trials. It simultaneously touches on questions concerning freedom of the press in general, and of what can be said about the organizations of political Islam in particular. A contribution in *taz* is very clear: The media need a good lawyer to defend journalism, and the example of AYPA and other media organizations is brought up (*taz* 020608). The distinction between good journalism and threat due to intimidation is drawn, i.e. the journalism is threatened if the Islamist organizations continue to put the media under pressure. This distinction

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81 “Auch in der Verhandlungssache ‘Islamische Föderation gegen Ali Yildirim’ bekamen die Wohnzimmer-Journalisten Recht. Yildirim darf weiter seine Behauptungen unter die Leute bringen. Der kleinste Sender der Welt war also wieder ganz gross”.

77
also plays a role in Dantschke’s quote in another contribution regarding the motivations of the IFB to permanently be in court:

To go to court in order to be financially ruined à la Scientology; that is what they want, Ms Dantschke says. It is not the content of the suit against Yildirim that worries the two of them, but the time involved and the nerves.82 (FAZ 020422)

The AYPA team is not anxious about the content of the charges, but rather about the time and money they have to spend in these trials. The IFB is aiming at ruining AYPA financially and thus reducing them to silence. Mentioning the aim of the counterpart as a quote by an affected person connotes on the one hand something real and authentic, but on other hand as something limited, not proven, which is (only) an opinion of the respective person. The journalist who wrote the article in the conservative FAZ wants to leave this open, while the intent of the newspaper taz is more evident: The IFB aims to ostracize and frighten critical journalists (taz 991002). AYPA is threatened by this organization.

3.2.7. Fundamentalist tendencies in the Turkish community

This is a topic selected by a plurality of newspapers, but most of them do not refer to AYPA. I have only chosen the articles that refer to AYPA and have not included articles on this topic written by Dantschke and Yildirim in the newspaper taz. As mentioned above, this topic concerns fundamentalist tendencies in the Turkish community, especially the connection between the IFB and the Islamist organization Milli Görüş.

In most of the contributions, the AYPA journalists are quoted and appear as experts on the Turkish community and fundamentalist tendencies. The quotes have the function of illustrating or deepening a phenomenon, to increase the trustworthiness of a message. For example: Dantschke takes part in a hearing of the Bundestag about fundamentalist influences in Germany. She and others are quoted – as a kind of illustra-

82 “‘Totprozessieren nach Scientology-Art’ wolle man sie, sagt Frau Dantschke. Nicht der Inhalt der Klagen, die sich stets gegen Yildirim richten, beunruhigt die beiden, sondern der Aufwand an Zeit und Nerven, die sie kosten”.

78
tion – in a summary of the hearing in the newspaper *Neues Deutschland* (i.e., ND 040922). Yildirim acts as an expert and insider concerning relationships in the Turkish community, which is substantiated through his introduction as coming from the Turkish *AYPA* (taz 970421). His quote plays the role of a final comment by an expert. In another contribution, Dantschke’s presentation as an expert is substantiated by all her merits: as a journalist for the newspaper *taz*, the left-wing weekly *Jungle World*, and the TV station *AYPA*, having written for many years about the network of people and organizations close to *Milli Görüs* (NZZ 030516). The topic switches to restrictions on the freedom of the press, which is close to the *AYPA* topic. The content of the article in *NZZ* is about German media and radical Islamism. Dantschke is, on the one hand, an expert on the Islamic Federation and its fundamentalist tendencies, and on the other, a witness to the efforts of the Islamists to reduce the freedom of the press. She and *AYPA* have covered several such attempts by the group. In the context of the article, she functions as an exemplification in order to increase the trustworthiness of the message.

Describing attempts to frighten the sender is a topic that is also selected by *taz*. Already in 1993, an Islamist attacked Yildirim with a knife because of *AYPA*’s programme about the Alevites, who were persecuted in Turkey (taz 930715). Some years later Hasan Özdogan, chairman of *Islamrat*, the umbrella organization of all Islamic organizations in Germany, stated that Ali Yildirim was a “troublemaker, slanderer, dirty journalist and radical, unbelieving Alevite with a great desire for revenge on Muslims” and hindered *AYPA* from taking part in a meeting of the Social Democrats (SPD) about integration of the Muslims in Germany (taz 991002). The daily *taz* calls it a scandal that they did not gain admission to the meeting, and the journalist, Eberhard Seidel, explains it with the fact that *AYPA* conducts investigative journalism and uncovers machinations (taz 991002). Özdogan does not want to hear the truth is the underlying message. Some days later, *taz* notices that the Turkish community is filled with consternation about this statement by the chairman, and *Islamrat’s* credibility and openness for talks is questioned.

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83 “Unruhestifter, Verleumder, schmutzigen Journalisten und radikalen, ungläubigen Aleviten mit grossem Rachebedürfnis an Muslimen”.

79
(taz 991011). In the context of the article, the Turkish Community stands behind AYPA, and the Islamist tendencies are criticized.

Only one contribution treats the topic of fundamentalism and school, namely in the Islamic elementary school of Berlin. The journalist asks if there are tendencies of fundamentalism in this school, and argues that it all depends on who is answering. Also here, Dantschke appears as a “writer and Islamism expert” (taz 040624) who explains the relationship of the school to Islamists through the association behind the school, but when the journalist asks the principal of the school she gets the opposite answer, that the association does not influence the school. Another person, a member of the union, is quoted and confirms that there is massive social control of the school and that the influence of the association is limited. This is the only contribution in which different opinions and viewpoints are shown side by side. Here, Dantschke stands for a more extreme opinion, being too critical of Islamic organizations and seeing fundamentalist endeavours everywhere.

When newspapers have needed a voice about fundamentalist tendencies in the Turkish community, they have chosen the AYPA journalists. The AYPA editors function as experts, journalists, or writers who remind us that there are Islamists among the Muslims in the Turkish community. The newspapers pin them down on these topics. They do not refer to them or ask them to act as experts if they want to describe a Muslim community without Islamic fundamentalism.

3.2.8. German-Turkish life

The German-Turkish life in Berlin is an elastic topic that can touch different social systems of society. Referring to AYPA, there are topics covering election campaign, racism, so-called “honour killing”, earthquake victims in Turkey, the European Union, etc. Also in this subtopic, the AYPA journalists appear mainly as experts. Not all newspapers know what AYPA is; for instance, the liberal Der Tagesspiegel wrongly calls the TV station a “German-Turkish press agency” (990823).

Concerning the occasion of the heavy earthquake in Turkey in August 1999, AYPA, especially its homepage, is pointed out because it pub-
lished a link to the lists of missing persons provided by the Turkish government. This is seen as a positive measure to help those in Germany who are concerned for their relatives and friends (Tsp 90823, BZ 990823). The newspaper taz increases the argumentation through the small organization/large organization binary:

What TGD does not achieve, AYPA-TV, for example, does. AYPA-TV is a small local German-Turkish TV station in Berlin that offers all the information on its homepage (aypa.de) that Hakki Keskin’s organization has missed.  

In contrast to the organization of the Turkish community in Germany (TGD), which has not done much, a small German-Turkish local channel in Berlin offers necessary information on its homepage. A small local organization has done much more than a large national one has. In line with the article, AYP\textsuperscript{A} has the function of illustrating what went wrong in the administration of the TGD. AYP\textsuperscript{A} is the good example and TGD the bad one.

All other contributions quote the AYP\textsuperscript{A} journalists in the context of different issues. Also here, Yildirim gives information about the Turkish community (Berliner Morgenpost 020901). As a Berlin Islamism expert, Dantschke explains the role of a special fundamentalist group in connection with “honour killing” (BZ 050928). As co-editor of a study on racism in Berlin, she warns of the development of parallel societies, which counteracts democracy and plurality (BZ 030522). In connection with an anti-Israel demonstration in Berlin, Dantschke is quoted as a member of the alliance against anti-Semitism and as a journalist who demands a public discussion about these annually recurring demonstrations (BZ 031124).

In time, the AYP\textsuperscript{A} team is reputed to be experts on the Turkish community and on Islamist and racist tendencies in society, and are quoted by newspapers with different political colours. Newspapers refer to AYP\textsuperscript{A} as a source such as a programme, or to information on its home-

\textsuperscript{84} “Was die TGD nicht leistet, schafft zum Beispiel AYP\textsuperscript{A}-TV, ein kleiner lokaler deutsch-türkischer Sender in Berlin, der auf seiner Internetseite (aypa.de) all die Informationen bietet, die Hakki Keskins Organisation verschlafen hat”.  

81
3.3. Conclusion

Unlike the Rami communication, this case is treated exclusively by journalists and does not involve other political or cultural actors. The communication about the presentation of AYPA in the mainstream media is characterized mainly by the alternative media/established media distinction. This distinction has the function of elaborating the extraordinary character of the station from the angle of the established media. The working conditions and methods of AYPA break with existing expectations regarding the production of TV. In spite of the poor conditions the broadcaster can be taken seriously, and this is unusual and surprising. Everything that is unexpected is good information, even if the unexpected information is positive. Thus, it does not need to be negative in order to be selected as information when it comes from an alternative/minority media station that does not belong to the inner-social environment of the established media. The mainstream media anticipate the expectations of imagined recipients, i.e. they believe they know what readers want, namely to read something about a “miracle”. In so doing, they reflect communication as communication and self-reference is actualized (Luhmann 1996, 30). The contributions differ a bit according to the colour of the newspaper. The liberal left-wing newspaper *taz* promoting the effort of AYPA is more distinct in marking the positive role and reputation of the station and wants to give AYPA a voice in the public discourse. Others are more reserved in judging the TV station’s role. They take normally expected circumstances as their points of reference and overemphasize minor details such as clothes, decoration, appearance, surroundings, etc., in order to gain attention for the contribution.

It is not only that AYPA is presented as the smallest TV station in the world, but also that topics brought up by the station are on the mainstream media agenda. Referring to AYPA, conflicts and violations such as inadequate media policy or threats to the freedom of the press are
preferred. By reporting on conflicts or even scandals, AYPa is presented as an isolated case, which strengthens on the one hand the outrage and on the other hand the criticism of the situation in question. AYPa even functions as a good example and shows what to do in the case of a natural disaster. From this point of view it is easy to criticize other organizations for misbehaviour. Contributions treating racist and fundamentalist tendencies in society use AYPa as a reliable source: The AYPa members are quoted in the newspaper, appear as experts, and also tell what needs to be done. They have made quite a name for themselves and the newspaper can rely on their competence.

Following Luhmann, selection always generates non-selection, or the “unmarked space”. The marking stresses whatever is interesting for one reason or another. Simultaneously, it shows the other side of the distinction, that there is something else:

Understanding the communication requires, here as elsewhere too, the distinction of information and utterance. The fact that the information is true (demonstrable, cannot be disproved, etc.) is therefore perfectly compatible with the observation of the utterance as contingent, as something that might not be carried out, as the product of a decision, conditional upon motives. (Luhmann 2000, 37)

The utterance or contribution is a product of a decision made in the media system. The work consists of fitting information into headings and templates. Time and available space play a decisive role in the final selection. What is not selected is not newsworthy and does not have any function in the communication process. For example, that AYPa was forced to stop broadcasting is not worth a larger contribution. This was expected and is not unusual. The extensive debate on the IFB and their connections to the Islamist group Milli Görüş, which AYPa brought up, is conducted mainly without reference to AYPa in the newspapers. AYPa does not fulfil any function in this context; it does not seem to be necessary to increase the effect of the message, or it might even jeopardize it. There is only one exception: A contribution quotes Dantschke (without reference to AYPa) among others as an Islam expert who has been reporting on Milli Görüş for years (Tsp 041212).
Contributions focusing on the AYPa station select this information to illustrate investigative journalism and give good examples using binaries. Reviewing the AYPa programme or referring to them is a topic that is hardly selected despite such selection criteria as conflict, local relevance and topicality. Here, it is obvious that the alternative/minority media do not belong to the inner-social environment of the mainstream media. Strictly speaking, the established media normally do not take note of them or watch their programmes. Something extraordinary has to happen for them to be selected as information and to be communicated.
The theory of social systems says that systems operate to preserve their stability in order to resist potential degeneration caused by contingency. The focus on self-produced or self-constructed and self-referential behaviour does not mean that the systems are autonomous or that they do not have any connection to the environment, i.e. outside of the system. The media system reflects the environment through the filter of its own conditions and determines where the system ends and begins. To survive, the system needs to determine its boundaries and its environment. It has to be sensitive to environmental instabilities, such as changes in the public opinion. This also applies to the mainstream media’s selection of topics. The treatment of selected topics is therefore dependent on the system’s own operations and takes place within the system.

Already the topic of the Rami case implies boundaries for the communication. Anti-Semitism has a special history in Europe, being ever present, and has an influence on the mode of subjugation to the rules of communication. According to Michel Foucault, knowledge and power are joined in a discourse. Values and norms, and here, the attitude towards racist propaganda are always embedded in relationships of power; they structure the discourse, permit certain kinds of arguments and forbid others. Or, according to Pierre Bourdieu (1982), it is the symbolic power of this topic that revives the power conditions in the communication process, and as a result forbids anti-Semitic opinions. To argue with Luhmann, getting the uncertainty of the communication under control, the system of the mainstream media follows its internal codes and semantics based on the anticipated expectations of imagined recipients and the commonly shared collective knowledge. The extent to which new semantics can be admitted depends on anticipated collectively approved evaluations.
In these cases, it is the code of the mainstream media that determines the communication, especially through the selection of topics and their treatment. The Rami case is treated as a key event, which is also supported by the possibility to connect known persons to the topic. Gaining the function of a key event means that it is ascribed a special meaning with a high impact of conflict because of its negative character, a high potential of interpretation possibilities and therefore a high potential for further communication. Finally, it can be referred to from the different social systems, guaranteeing survival of the topic for a long period of time. Ascribing the function as a key event triggers more contributions that are in line with different interpretations and thus constitute thematically related new contributions. In recursion to the initial topic, schemata are used or even generated anew.

Unlike the Radio Islam case, the border of the topic AYPA is not politically or historically biased as there are no well-known people involved. It is about a media station whose mere abnormality makes it worth mentioning. There is no symbolic power, only two people conducting investigative journalism. But it is also a TV station that has the potential of serving as a good example in a multi-cultural society, functioning as a communication bridge. The mainstream media mainly make use of this by referring to the AYPA editors as experts in their contributions. The mediated topic on AYPA implies only few conflict possibilities because it is only positive. It is fascinating, however, and fulfils news reporting’s demand for “good news”. The contributions express fascination rather than orientation in a contingent world, and with this focus give only limited possibilities for connecting communication. Thus, the topic is exhausted when the abnormal conditions have been sufficiently treated from different views. It does not have the function of a key event because it is treated as an isolated case in a diverse media landscape that has the potential for some recursions, but it is not developed to function as a symbol of, e.g., a great feat through simple means or as a metonym.
Treating AYPA from the perspective of the alternative media/mainstream media distinction sheds light on AYPA, which is characterized by something that does not correspond to the standard of producing TV. This presents a problem being taken seriously in order to be communicated in other contexts (besides covering production conditions) and to be referred to. Topics brought up by AYPA that circle around fundamentalist tendencies in the Turkish community are usually not credited to AYPA or its editors. If this does happen, the editors function as experts and are given the role of people warning against fundamentalism within the Turkish community. This role is a delicate one because it can cause confrontations, which are not always welcome in a city with a large Turkish community. The role is fixed, and even if there are other topics the editors bring up they have problems being selected as information by the mainstream media. They are marked as video journalists at the smallest TV station in the world, treating topics denouncing fundamentalist tendencies in the Turkish community. It is only when the mainstream media can make use of this role that they are selected. But this role is related to time – the media have a short memory, and a new role and function can be constructed.
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What is necessary for minority media to be picked up on the radar of mainstream media? This report analyses Swedish media coverage of the Stockholm-based Radio Islam, and German media coverage of the Berlin-based AYPA-TV. Analysis is given from a difference-theoretical point of view, as developed by Niklas Luhmann. The case of Radio Islam, the repeatedly banned – for its broadcasts of hate – community radio station, takes its rightful place in Swedish history. It received intense media attention in the 1990s and provokes reaction even today. The second case, that of the local German-Turkish AYPA-TV, was not covered by the mainstream media to the same degree, but met the media’s criteria for being unusual. What caused these two cases to be taken on by the mainstream media?