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**“Who writes the rules on the internet?” – The conversation
about Facebook in German news media between 2012 and
2021**

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Abstract

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Facebook is one of the most powerful internet companies worldwide with little to few alternatives on the market. With the power and size, scandals are part of the company's history, and the public perception is ever-changing. How Facebook is viewed by the public has an impact on the company's success, especially since it is built on its users' data. The public opinion can be impacted by how conversations are portrayed by the media, which further influences the company's success and survival. Building on the importance of perception and managing of important public conversations, this study relies on strategic communication theory paired with the concept of corporate hypocrisy as this approach is relevant to understand the necessity for strategic communication in corporations operating in the public eye. The purpose of this study is therefore to examine the situation concerning public critique which Facebook has to navigate in German news media. A particular focus is set on underlying patterns in language and its development between 2012 and 2021 in Germany. To accomplish this purpose, a discourse analysis of 69 articles of three main German media outlets, *CHIP*, *BILD* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was carried out. The results of the study suggest there are four main conversations about Facebook in German news media: Mark Zuckerberg, their business model, their power and the lack of transparency. All four discourses evolved into a more critical and accusatory reporting. The rhetoric analysis of the articles shows an underlying tone of mockery, irony and sarcasm. Moreover, the findings suggest that Facebook is strategically selective and restrictive in their communication with the media and the public.

Keyword: Facebook, discourse analysis, strategic communication, corporate hypocrisy, perception

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1. Introduction

How much more glorious seemed the young, resourceful entrepreneur from the USA, who had invented a social network for the Internet at Harvard University, who found more than 900 million users all over the world, who was received with honour by heads of state and seemed to be founding a new era of the market economy: young, free, digital. (SZ, IPO 3)

Facebook is arguably one of the most influential social media platforms in the 21st century, with 2.8 billion monthly active users in the last quarter of 2020 (Statista, 2021a). The social platform allows its users to share their life globally, post pictures and texts, and let other people know what is happening in their life. Facebook proclaims that they “build technologies that help people connect with friends and family, find communities, and grow businesses” (Facebook website, 2021). Facebook’s business model is based on providing the chance for organisations, companies and small businesses to place targeted and personalised advertisements on the platform to reach the right audience and create more impressionable content.

Based on the sole idea behind Facebook, much data is shared on the platform and with Facebook as a company, that data can be analysed to know more about a user’s attitudes, likings and holistic personality. As with any other big company, controversy and public debate is nothing new to Facebook and is part of the company’s evolution and constant adaptation. This thesis connects at that particular point and is interested in the situation of public critique that Facebook has to navigate, with a focus on the German news media. The interest is in understanding and analysing how the discourse about Facebook has changed. Special attention is paid to the language used to construct and portray the company and how that has transformed with time. It will be investigated if there is an underlying tone to detect and how that possibly shifted. Additionally, the interest lies in examining how Facebook’s strategy is portrayed in the media and has developed.

Germany is a member of the European Union (thereafter EU) and, with the largest number of citizens and a solid and consistent economy, one of the most important members of the Union (The Economist, 2020). With its unique history, the German people are particularly sensitive to what happens to their data and who gains

access to it; therefore, how Facebook is perceived and debated about in Germany is important for the EU. Discussion, controversy and sensitivity to certain issues may come up earlier in Germany than in other European country but can be seen as a possible foreshadowing change in attitude that follows in other European countries.

In the beginning stages of Facebook, there was an expectation that Facebook could help to democratise the internet and provide equal opportunity to different people to get heard. A prime example is the “Arab Spring” (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), in which Facebook was used to organise protests against the current regimes (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). These expectations of Facebook changed over the years, and more intense criticism overshadowed the original goal of the platform. This criticism can be monitored by focal flashpoints in Facebook’s history that were significant for the company and impacted their changes to their policies and public reputation.

Moreover, the constant criticism of Facebook is not only reported on in mainstream media and observable on the individual and societal level; it has also gained resonance and importance in the academic world. Scholars research the company and its impact on various dimensions, such as Brailovskaia, Rohmann, Bierhoff, Margraf and Köllner (2019), who show in their study that Facebook addiction is a problem for the younger generation and can lead, among other things to anxiety and withdrawal symptoms. Athena Chavarria, a former executive assistant at Facebook and currently working at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, said in an interview with the New York Times, “I am convinced the devil lies in our phone” (Bowles, 2018). Moreover, the legal aspects of Facebook are discussed by Esteve (2017) as well as the technical dimension is showcased in the research by Awan, Waheed, Khalid, Kahn, Mansoor and Rehman (2020).

The clear public critique of Facebook is vital to analyse as they are directly targeting the company’s core, its business model. Because the main critical conversation targets the core business, strategic communication is needed to pick up the conversation appropriately. Zerfass, Verčič, Nothhaft and Werder (2018) define an issue strategic “when it becomes *substantial* or *significant* for an organization’s or other entity’s development, growth, identity, or survival” (p. 493). In other words, when a conversation has the potential to threaten the core business of a company, it needs to be addressed by the responsible communications department. When Facebook

is critiqued in public, and the topics discussed aim at the core business model, it is significant to the company and vital to navigate.

Another layer of concern is Facebook's portrayal in the media and the consequent perception of the company by the public. With the media highlighting critique regarding Facebook and showcasing discrepancies between the company's words and actions, the perception of hypocrisy can arise. When a company is perceived as hypocritical, this perception and hypocrisy conversation could be harmful to the company and must be navigated through strategic communication. According to Lenz, Wetzel and Hammerschmidt (2017), today's environment is media-driven, which can prompt the public to perceive companies and organisations as insincere if they behave in ways that fall short of their self-proclaimed standards of social responsibility. Chen, Hang, Pavelin and Porter (2020) further elaborate on the importance between the same or a different domain regarding a social issue. They argue that the risk of coming across as hypocritical is higher when showcasing an inconsistency or transgression in the same domain. Wagner et al. (2020) suggest that "issues that stakeholders deem particularly important (e.g., a firm's environmental responsibility) may be evaluated more critically and consequently may cause a more pronounced reaction" (p. 390). They propose the dimensions of hypocrisy, the moral hypocrisy, the behavioural hypocrisy and the hypocrisy attributions, with all three dimensions having a significant impact on how a company is perceived and consequently judged by the public. Depending on how the newspapers portray Facebook, how the topics of the business model or the power Facebook possesses are constructed, the sentiment of corporate hypocrisy can arise, as well as the perception that Facebook cannot be trusted. When such a portrayal arises, the conversation possesses strategic significance, and ultimately Facebook's CEO and founder Mark Zuckerberg needs to decide on how to navigate those critique points.

This study connects the theoretical framework of strategic communication and corporate hypocrisy to examine which strategic situation concerning public critique Facebook has to navigate in German news media. It is of interest how the criticism is presented, how it changes over the years and what role the language used plays. Is there an underlying tone or pattern to detect? What can be said about Facebook's strategy? Report all outlets the same? The study aims to come closer to answering those questions and providing an overview of German news coverage of Facebook and

enriching the existing knowledge about within the scientific community about the perception of Facebook and how they communicate.

1.1. Aim, purpose & research questions

This study aims to examine, by a qualitative approach in the form of a discourse analysis, which strategic situation concerning public critique Facebook has to navigate in German news media. Specifically, the different critique points and the language used to describe Facebook are examined and how that has changed over the years. While doing that, the goal is to analyse any reoccurring patterns or changes in the use of language describing Facebook.

In order to achieve this, a qualitative study is conducted in form of a discourse analysis. Three main media outlets in Germany are chosen to investigate articles within a specific timeframe to provide a detailed and in-depth analysis of the empirical material.

By doing this, the thesis seeks to contribute to the field of strategic communication and deepen the existing knowledge about language used in context with Facebook. While there is a lot of academic research towards the consequences of using Facebook, there is less about Facebook itself and its portrayal in the media and the consequent communication strategy.

In order to reach its aim, the study poses the following research question:

- 1) *Which strategic situation concerning public critique does Facebook have to navigate in German news media?*
- 2) *Which topics of critique are brought up against Facebook in the German news media? How have they changed over time?*
- 3) *Which changes in the journalistic and rhetorical reporting about Facebook can be observed in German newspapers between the IPO and the latest data leak?*

1.2. Delimitations

This study is not aiming towards making generalised conclusions but rather contributing to a deeper understanding of Facebook's perception and the use of language regarding Facebook in Germany. The focus sets on how language is used to shape and constitute discourses and its evolution over time with constant development in social acceptance. The timeframe chosen is a limitation that serves to provide a clear overview of the material. This research is further specifically analysing German news coverage, as the country has been chosen for its unique case of sensitivity and powerful standing within the EU. The number of outlets was explicitly limited to be able to go into detail and find clear recurring patterns within the same outlets. All of the three main outlets have different focuses, which maintains the diversity of the empirical data.

1.3. Disposition

The thesis is divided into seven parts. A background chapter follows the introduction to provide an overview of Facebook as a company and Germany as a country and its history and relationship with data privacy. The third chapter concerns the literature review, which will present an initial overview of research critical of Facebook in all areas and is followed by the theoretical framework, which provides the understanding of strategic communication and corporate hypocrisy. Following this, the methodology, epistemology and research design are explained. The sixth chapter constitutes of the findings and analysis. Lastly, the thesis finishes with the conclusion and suggestions for future research.

2. Background

In this background chapter, the Facebook's history is explained, as well as the history Germany possesses with data privacy and why it has a special meaning to Germans.

2.1. Facebook, the company

In order to understand which situation of public critique Facebook finds itself in and needs to navigate, the company Facebook itself needs to be introduced and explained how they developed and evolved in the last decades.

The social network Facebook was founded in 2004 by four Harvard students, Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. The service was originally just available for Harvard students but soon expanded to regional universities, the Ivy League and further colleges before opening for global users in September 2006. Necessary for a Facebook account were a valid email address and being aged above 13 (Barr, 2018). Two essential milestones in Facebook's history are the acquisition of Instagram in April 2012 and hitting the 1 billion membership mark. Over the years, more features and acquisitions like What's App and the introduction of the Messenger App were announced, and in 2020, Facebook reached 2.8 billion monthly active users (Sraders, 2018; Statista, 2021c).

Controversy follows Facebook since its beginnings, as they have settled multiple lawsuits and public attacks over the years. The earliest is the origin of the idea behind Facebook, as Zuckerberg was accused of stealing the idea for the social network from three seniors at Harvard; the matter was resolved in 2008 in a settlement (Carlson, 2010). The topic of data privacy is a recurring topic of discussion for Facebook, as the first outcry came in 2006 when it introduced the newsfeed, which consisted of every change that a user's friend had made to their page. Following user complaints, Facebook soon after introduced the privacy controls in which one can control what other people could see in their newsfeed about an individual user (Hall, 2021).

While the introduction of the newsfeed ignited controversy for Facebook, the pressure from a business perspective mounted when Facebook became a publicly-

traded company in 2012 (Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2020). The stock value dropped the moment following the trading, and shareholders increased their pressure on Facebook, as they were more and more lacking confidence in the effectiveness of Facebook's advertising services. With the pressure building, Facebook transformed in the same year it went public “from an online payment for games and applications to an advertising-driven business model delivered mainly on smart phones” (DCMSC of the House of Commons, 2019: 26; cited in Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2020, p.66). To keep in line with the demands of the shareholders, Facebook started to harvest personal information from its users, which in turn could be used for more detailed targeting of advertising messages. One of the biggest scandals in Facebook's history was around Cambridge Analytica and the revelation that personal data from 87 million Facebook accounts had been wrongfully shared with the political consulting firm. This allowed the firm to target Facebook users with political advertisements during the 2016 US presidential elections and the Brexit referendum (Barr, 2018). Following that scandal, Zuckerberg had to appear before Congress to explain what happened and what the company plans on changing on the model so this can be avoided in the future.

Besides the constant conversation about Facebook's history, the numbers also speak for its success and influence. The company's total revenue for 2020 registers with 85.9 billion U.S dollars, an increase of 22% to 2019's 70.7 billion U.S. dollars (Facebook, 2021; Statista, 2021b). Facebook's primary source of income is digital advertising, with the total advertising revenue being 84.1 billion U.S. dollars (Statista, 2021d). According to statistics, Facebook hold 74.81 per cent of market share worldwide as of July 2021 (Statcounter, 2021).

2.2. Germany

Germany is with 82 million citizens one of the largest countries in Europe and the EU. With its economic power and political standing, Germany has an increased influence on the EU, which cannot be overlooked (The Economist, 2020). With its history of privacy concerns, the German people are more sensitive regarding giving up their private and personal data than other European countries (Morey, Forbath & Schoop, 2015). Previous governments in German history collected and stored citizens' private data to eventually use that against them when deemed necessary. Therefore, German

citizens have a stronger awareness and vulnerability towards sharing their private data (Boie, 2014). This is also observable in German media, as data privacy issues are constantly discussed. Over the last years, the discussion has heated up with the ever-evolving technology and several new functions available for both citizens and companies (ecommerce magazine, 2020). Before the General Data Protection Regulation (thereafter GDPR) was introduced for the European Union, Germany had their own privacy laws, and even after the implementation of the European regulations, Germany went further in their restrictions than what the GDPR stipulates (Neuerer, 2019).

For this study, Germany can be viewed as a special but important case. As the German people are more sensitive about giving up data but simultaneously, the country also has an impact on the EU, their regulations and how issues could be viewed and skewed. Because Germany has that extra sensitivity towards privacy issues, controversy and protest come up earlier than in other countries, which could foreshadow changes in acceptance towards behaviours and methods in other European countries.

3. Literature Review

This chapter aims to provide a brief overview of how Facebook has been researched in different academic fields and which critical points are examined.

Facebook, as a company, has not been studied in depth regarding the communication style and the overall public perception nowadays. Research shows that in 2013, the perception of Facebook was positive and only took a slight hit with the uprising concerns about data privacy (Johnston, Chen & Haumann, 2013). As CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg has been studied from an acoustic-melodic perspective (Niebuhr, Brem, Michalsky & Neitsch, 2020).

However, most studies and literature focus on what happens on the platform Facebook and which impact Facebook has on its users and how interacting on Facebook can influence people's choices. Therefore, the literature review aims to provide a brief and concise overview of the academic critique published about Facebook.

From a legal perspective, there are three fundamental differences between the legal frameworks in the EU and the U.S.:

Europe believes in protecting data privacy as a fundamental right, whereas the US legal tradition is different; Europe is concerned about invasion of privacy by big corporations, while the USA cares instead about an invasion of privacy by big government; Europe believes in comprehensive legislation while the USA supports self-regulation and multi-stakeholder processes. (Esteve, 2017, p. 46)

These foundations need to be taken into account for any legal reasoning Facebook's or their original privacy policies, as they originated in the U.S. within their legal contexts.

The main legal interest concerning Facebook is its privacy policies and its business model, which is legal in the US but has caused friction within the European legal community. Their business model consists of "providing a free service to users in exchange for the use of their data. The information is collected, categorised and

analysed in order to provide extremely targeted advertisement, the bread and butter of giant tech companies' business model" (Houser & Voss, 2018, p. 5). While Facebook is not charging their users for access to the platform, they are, however, charging advertisers for the access to the user profiles created.

In 2018, the new data protection regulation was introduced in the EU, the GDPR, which was officially created to harmonise the privacy laws in the member states; it can also be assumed that the legislation is "intended to hold all companies in the tech field to the same standards" (Houser & Voss, 2018, p. 8). The GDPR relies, like its predecessor, the EU Data Protective Directive, on the traditional principle that the processing of personal data is prohibited unless a legal basis for it can be brought forward by those collecting data (Botta & Wiedemann, 2019). Based on the new GDPR rules, American tech companies had to change their privacy policies to maintain their ability to operate in the EU (Houser & Voss, 2018).

Esteve (2017) also points to privacy policies as a matter of interest. As stated previously, the privacy policies in the U.S. rules are not as strict as in the EU. European law has a strict set of rules that control the use of personal information by websites. Accordingly, privacy policies must comply with the privacy standards of the law. Therefore, both the actual practices of processing data and what is written in the privacy policies are constrained by the law in Europe. Nevertheless, the authors are firm that what is written in Facebook's privacy policies should not be considered how the company is processing data in actuality.

Most of Facebook's legal issues stem from their privacy policies, as highlighted by Botta and Wiedemann, and their dominance in the digital spectrum. As a German court for competition law found in 2019, Facebook is making their users lose control as they are not able to understand "which data from which sources are combined for which purposes with data from their Facebook accounts" (Botta & Wiedemann, 2019, p. 439). Facebook's market power is given as a reason why users do not have the option to avoid the combination of their data from multiple different sources, which points to Facebook's apps themselves and through third-party applications and websites.

As these articles show, Facebook has had different frictions with the law, and different perspectives within the legal framework have been presented and showcase that the root of the problems lies in their data handling processes and their privacy policies.

From a technical standpoint, several aspects regarding Facebook can be researched. Awan et al. (2020) have taken a closer look at Facebook's data security provided for its users. The terms of service, which need to be accepted by users to make use of the service, is mostly not read as it is written too complicated, and declining it is not an option. However, these terms of service provide an overview of what data is collected and officially state that Facebook is also collecting data even if a user is offline and Facebook cooperates with third-party companies and uses cookies.

Awan et al. (2020) are adamant that the data collection itself is the superficial problem mostly talked about as it is easier to see and understand, rather than targeting the combination and correlation between the different platforms of data mining, in order to provide a more detailed overview of the users and a tailored advertisement.

The study by Symeonidis, Biczók, Shirazi Pérez-Sola, Schroers and Preneel (2018) examines that direction and details the third-party access to data gained through Facebook applications, the so-called collateral information collection. This is defined as “the acquisition of users’ personal data through any means or tool initiated by anyone but the users themselves” (p. 181). Concretely, this plays a role when an individual users’ privacy is affected by other users' decisions. The importance is in the allowance to own several third-party applications, which in turn provides the owner with the opportunity to collect more personal data about users via multiple apps and utilise a type of data fusion and thereby construct a complete representation of the users’ profiles (Symeonidis et al., 2018). The results suggest that users are concerned about their privacy and would like to receive proper notifications and control mechanisms regarding collateral information collection.

The legal and technical perspectives are linked through the requirements stipulated in the GDPR. When collateral information collection is analysed through that perspective, there is a reason for it to be seen as a risk factor, as it presents key causes, a “lack of notification and consent, non-existence of privacy by default with regard to Facebook privacy settings and the amplifying effect of data fusion and, potentially profiling” (Symeonidis et al., 2018, p. 201).

Facebook has not only been researched from a legal or technical standpoint but also in the social context, particularly regarding addictiveness and disinformation; both topics will be briefly covered in the following part of the literature review.

In their longitudinal study from 2019, Brailovskaia et al. have studied addictive Facebook use with the premise that excessive use of social media may contribute to

the development of addiction-like symptoms such as mood modification, withdrawal symptoms or salience and relapse of old negative habits. Their research shows that “especially individuals with high level of negative mental health tend to escape into the Facebook world from daily stress, where they gain positive experiences often missed offline and therefore may better manage their negative mood” (Brailovskaia et al., 2019, p. 704). This, in turn, increases the risk of addictive use of Facebook, which further enhances symptoms they already suffer from and might impact the recovery negatively. Brailovskaia and Margraf (2017) findings support the previous literature that the positive association between Facebook addiction disorder and anxiety symptoms increases over time.

Another perspective of Facebook addiction focusing on academic performance and psychological well-being as a moderating effect is provided by Annamalai, Forouhgi, Iranmanesh and Buathong (2020). The understanding of psychological well-being in this study is about the recognition and actualisation of human potential. Meaning, people feel in control of their lives and feel their actions are meaningful and have a good relationship with others. Their results show that while Facebook is associated with social and entertainment needs, it is not significantly associated with recognition and information needs. The authors conclude, “users make efforts to meet their social and entertainment needs by receiving gratification from Facebook use. Such expectations could result in Facebook addiction” (Annamalai et al., 2020, p. 1948). Facebook addiction is further suggested to affect students’ academic performance negatively, and the psychological well-being negatively moderates the relationship between students’ entertainment needs and Facebook addiction.

A negative impact on academic performance, which is most likely due to Facebook addiction, was additionally found in Busalim et al. (2019), as well as self-esteem to play a potential role in addictive behaviour towards Facebook.

Facebook is not only used for connecting friends and family or building an extensive network; in recent years, the platform has also emerged as a distribution platform for news content, especially for young users. However, the rise of fake news on platforms like Facebook has impacted its credibility regarding political information. The term ‘fake news’ is mainly associated with disinformation, which are fabricated or deliberately manipulated pieces of information that are newsworthy in the current social settings and are being spread with the intent to deceive. Facebook is one of the important platforms for distributing such content (Müller & Schulz, 2019). Müller and

Schulz (2019) investigated the relationships between German users' perceptions of their own fake news exposure and their evaluation and verification efforts of news content from Facebook. The findings suggest that the evaluation of Facebook as a news source is not related to the perceived quantity of contact with fake news or its debate. However, the results imply, "users with high trust in traditional news media perceive Facebook as a rather problematic outlet for news whereas Facebook has a much better reputation among those who prefer alternative news content" (Müller & Schulz, 2019, p. 556). Those who believe fake news originate from alternative sources perform more verification of news content on Facebook; this behaviour also increases with a higher perception of fake news and significantly, through the encounter with the fake news debate.

With increasing fake news on social platforms like Facebook, measures are taken to correct those and to distribute the correct information. Interventions can be helpful to reduce the belief in fake or false news, but not with the same degree of effectiveness. Specifically, there is shown to be a difference between a general warning about false news and two types of particular warnings about individual articles that are questioned by fact-checkers (Clayton et al., 2019). A general warning is shown to decrease the belief in false headlines; however, it also reduces the belief in real news and does not seem effective. The usage of tags like "Rated false" and "Disputed" on Facebook (Clayton et al., 2019) have a modest effect in reducing the belief in false news.

Another approach found in literature is correcting misinformation via corrective messages across multiple social media platforms rather than only one (Zhao, 2019). Placing corrective messages across multiple social media platforms has a greater impact on readers than those that only read corrective messages on a single social media platform. Further, the attitude towards corrective messages is more positive in those that encounter corrective messages on multiple social media platforms rather than a single one.

While it is important to understand how readers perceive misinformation, it is also crucial to look at how the platforms themselves communicate about misinformation and how they plan on combating them. Iosifidis and Nicoli (2020) have taken a closer look at Facebook's public announcements concerning disinformation and fake news. Their qualitative analysis implies that Facebook "identified itself as not being an arbiter of truth" and "showing its reluctance to remove content from its platforms even when it knows it is bad" (p. 74). The company instead

focuses on setting community standards and policies for sanctioning categorised content. An emphasis is further put on machine learning and Artificial Intelligence to identify disinformation. Overall, Facebook aims to combat disinformation by tweaking and adapting technologies and policies (Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2020).

As the literature review shows, Facebook has been studied from multiple perspectives such as socially, technically or legally. This existing research is taken as basis for the study and grants the researcher to understand which points of criticism are highlighted academically and could be found in the empirical data as well.

4. Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for the thesis, consisting of strategic communication and corporate hypocrisy. First, strategic communication is defined and elaborated on what turns a conversation strategic. Second, corporate hypocrisy and its multiple dimensions are explored.

4.1. Strategic Communication

The concept of strategic communication has been articulated and discussed by scholars for years, with one of the most prominent definitions coming from Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, and Sriramesh (2007), in which they are defining strategic communication as “the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission” (p.3). Following this first definition, multiple followed, with different focuses, perspectives and aims.

For this study, the understanding of strategic communication of Zerfass et al. (2018) has been adopted. The authors argue that a matter can be considered strategic “when it becomes *substantial* or *significant* for an organization’s or other entity’s development, growth, identity, or survival” (p. 493). The authors provide the following definition:

Strategic communication encompasses all communication that is substantial for the survival and sustained success of an entity. Specifically, strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication by an organization or other entity to engage in conversations of strategic significance to its goals. (Zerfass et al. p. 493)

In other words, any matter, issue or conversation that can pose a threat to an organisation’s success and survival needs to be acknowledged as a strategic matter and engaged with accordingly. Further, conversations of strategic significance can take place in various areas spanning from global mass media and social media to conversations between employees or consumers. Those responsible for an organisation’s communication must be aware of the ever-changing landscape, its

drivers, technological evolutions and influences. Moreover, strategic actions do not necessarily have immediate consequences, which in return means that they cannot be corrected or changed very quickly (Zerfass et al., 2018).

Zerfass et al. (2018) argue that strategic significance contains two dimensions, the objective and the subjective. The subjective dimension is the attribution of the assigned importance of the matter or conversation. In that sense, if the top management decides a matter is strategic, it becomes strategic for that reason alone. The objective dimension of strategic importance is only comprehensively revealed in retrospect; however, organisations and companies can pick up on signs that the environment is changing (Zerfass et al. 2018). In that regard, there might be conversations happening that are not picked up by the responsible people in a company for managing the strategic communication, but those conversations pose an objective importance on the company's growth. Their failure to recognise them, pick them up and shape them establishes a failure of strategic communication management (Zerfass et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the key principle of strategic management is, according to Müller-Stewens and Lechner (2005), replacing mere chance with mistakes, which in turn constitutes that strategy means "making choices, and choices can be mistakes" (Zerfass et al., 2018, p. 494). Following this perspective, it is a matter of getting the strategic situation right in form of "make or break". Further, there are two essential variables when assessing a strategic issue, the substantiality of the matter to the company and the identification of the matter as substantial to the company. If the identification of substantiality is not made in time or wrong, mistakes are more likely to happen, and the company can take a hit for misidentified strategic communication matters (Zerfass et al., 2018).

Communication can occur in three different types within the levels of an organisation: 1) as a process in which information is relayed or as a conversation; 2) as a resource such as brands, established media with a significant audience or 3) in the form of intangible assets, meaning societal capital such as trust, reputation or image (Zerfass et al., 2018). Further, the contextual and environmental changes can have a considerable impact on an organisation and, therefore, also on the appropriate and needed communication. As Macnamara and Gregory (2018) point out, strategic listening can be applied to help organisations understand fundamental environmental changes, possibly faster than other organisations can, and therefore obtain a significant competitive advantage.

The authors are content in their argument that strategic communication happens under various conditions such as complexity, uncertainty, ambiguity, and considerable risk (Nothhaft, Werder, Verčič & Zerfass, 2018). An example by Zerfass et al. (2018) presented is a major speech by a CEO, as in that instance, the reception and reaction towards the speech cannot be tested beforehand and can lead to a “great success or a major disaster” (p. 495).

Additionally, there are different drivers of the strategic complexity that changes a conversation to a strategic one or a matter into a strategic matter. There is no blueprint or one-size-fits-all solution in those situations, which enable the communicators to show their strategic knowledge in handling such strategic issues. Those drivers are not mutually exclusive but additive; first, resource-driven, such as Initial public offerings (IPO) of corporations or other economic decisions that put the company's value to the test. Second, competition-driven, which might be the most crucial driver as the goal is to gain an edge over the competitor, find the niche to best perform in or evade direct competition. Third, environment-driven, which can complement the competition aspect in which the environment is changing, that can be sudden or gradual but regardless an essential driver for strategic significance and complexity. Fourth, risk-driven, high-stake scenarios, extraordinary, unknown and unpredictable situations are classic drivers for strategic complexity. Fifth, innovation-driven, which entails new things being tried and routines and methods are broken, and something new emerges. Sixth, engagement-driven entails the accessibility of resources that are not tied up to operational processes and, consequently, can be used for the company's communication. Lastly, operationally driven, meaning the processes within the organisation are changing, which turns the situation strategic in itself (Zerfass et al., 2018).

For this study, strategic communication is understood as communicating strategically about a matter or issue that has the potential of impacting a company's or organisation's success, growth or likewise cause disastrous outcome when not picked up and dealt with accordingly. Those key conversations that target a company's core business are essential to maintain a healthy company to sustain long-lasting success. This understanding is based on Zerfass et al.'s (2018) definition of strategic communication.

4.2. Corporate hypocrisy

As explained in the previous chapter, strategic communication is about managing potential harmful conversations and issues. In that regard, a company perceived as hypocritical, deceitful or dishonest is part of those conversations that need to be monitored. This chapter takes a closer look at how corporate hypocrisy is constructed and which aspects and factors play a role in that perception.

Wagner, Lutz and Weitz (2009) define corporate hypocrisy as “the belief that a firm claims to be something that it is not” (p.79). This definition goes hand in hand with Lenz, Wetzel and Hammerschmidt’s (2017) argument that today’s environment is media-driven, which can prompt the public to perceive companies and organisations as insincere if they behave in ways that fall short of their self-proclaimed standards of social responsibility. Another definition is provided by Scheidler, Edinger-Schons, Spanjol and Wieseke (2018) as the company’s actions are not matching with their promises or its overall identity and what it stands for.

Chen et al. (2020) present different perspectives on corporate hypocrisy, namely Wagner et al.'s (2009) understanding of "when a firm's CSR engagement is contrary to its stated standards of social responsibility, this can give rise to the perception of corporate hypocrisy and negative attitudes towards the firm" (Chen et al. 2020, p. 489). Chen et al. (2020) draw on the literature and highlight the failure to differentiate between inconsistencies within an organisation's actions and claims of undeserved moral benefits and inconsistencies because of the lack of ability. The authors establish that "individuals judge firms in the same way they judge other social targets, namely, on perceived warmth and competence" (Chen et al., 2020, p. 489).

The dimensions of warmth and competence for the analysis are modelled after Cuddy, Fiske and Glick (2008). The warmth dimension describes attributes such as trustworthiness, kindness and sincerity. It demonstrates the orientation that actions profit others more than oneself. The dimension of competence comprises the ability and efficiency to carry out tasks and social targets with an intention that is considered as capable, intelligent and skilful. The authors draw a comparison to the practice, as not-for-profit organisations are considered warmer but less competent, whereas profit-driven firms are considered more competent but less warm. Chen et al. (2020) furthermore draw on Effron and Monin’s (2010) difference between the same or a different domain regarding a social issue. In detail, this means if a good deed or a

transgression is associated with the same social issue or with a relatively unrelated issue.

In their recent study, Wagner, Korschun and Troebbs (2020) distinguish between three different facets of the perception of corporate hypocrisy: moral hypocrisy, behavioural hypocrisy, and hypocrisy attributions. Those can emerge from either a company's deceptive practices or mere inconsistent behaviour. The stakeholders' perception drives their cognitive, affective and behavioural responses. Wagner et al. (2020) build on Wagner et al.'s (2009) definition of corporate hypocrisy.

The three facets of corporate hypocrisy have different drivers; deceptive practices lead to perceptions of moral hypocrisy; inconsistent practices lead to perceptions of behavioural hypocrisy. Furthermore, either of them leads the stakeholders to extend their perception of the whole company, to attribute hypocrisy as a trait to the organisation. These facets influence the relationship between a company and its stakeholders in different ways.

Wagner et al. (2020) define moral hypocrisy as “the belief that a firm is trying to appear more virtuous than it is” (p. 387). This perception, which is based on ulterior and self-serving motivation by the company, comes to fruition when a company makes statements about its values and belief system yet avoids the costs that would come with actually having these qualities. The stakeholders then perceive these as preaching in bad faith.

The second facet, behavioural hypocrisy, is defined as “the belief that statements made by a firm deviate from its demonstrated behavior” (Wagner et al., 2020, p. 388). This type of behaviour prompts the stakeholders to perceive a lack of alignment between what is said and what is done. The difference between moral and behavioural hypocrisy relies on the circumstances, whether a company possesses the necessary resources to align their behaviour with their public statements or if they simply show bad faith and or dishonest motives.

The third facet attributed is the hypocrisy attribution in itself; it is defined as “an individual's personal judgement that a firm is hypocritical by its nature” (Wagner et al. 2020, p.388). It differs from the previous perceptions as attributions involve perceptions of underlying traits or the company's character. The authors expect moral hypocrisy to impact hypocrisy attributions stronger than behavioural hypocrisy.

Moreover, it can be separated between deceptive practices and inconsistent practices. In this regard, deceptive practices refer to statements or actions intended to

be misleading toward employees, consumers, and other stakeholders. Deceptive actions lead to the perception of moral hypocrisy. The second type of practice Wagner et al. (2020) identify is inconsistent practices. This refers to a company's statement or actions that may be incoherent at times but not necessarily intentionally. These types of practices suggest to stakeholders that the company is not reliable or at least unpredictable.

Finally, Wagner et al. (2020) suggest that "issues that stakeholders deem particularly important (e.g., a firm's environmental responsibility) may be evaluated more critically and consequently may cause a more pronounced reaction" (p. 390). This analysis ties in with Chen et al.'s (2020) suggestion of the importance of motives and the context and domain inconsistencies in which the hypocrisy takes place.

Touching on the relationship between corporate hypocrisy events and its effect on their relationship to the community and stakeholders are Kougiannou and O'Meara Wallis (2019). Their results find the community accepts tolerable hypocrisy to some degree, and it is a normalised part of the company-community relationship; typical cases of acceptance would be greenwashing or calculus-based trust. However, intolerable hypocrisy emerges when trust is breached or broken. This appears when stakeholders react and voice their opinion negatively. Cynicism and opposition are key signs of stakeholders not tolerating corporate hypocrisy and might go as far as taking legal action against the company or start protests. Finally, the findings suggest that intolerable hypocrisy can lead to possible breakdowns of relationships, trust and attacks by the community on a company's legitimacy (Kougiannou & O'Meara Wallis, 2019).

The theoretical framework for this study is constructed through strategic communication and corporate hypocrisy. Strategic communication is understood as communicating strategically about those issues that have the potential to be threatening a company's growth, success and well-being, and the need for these matters to be picked up by the responsible team within the company. Not picking up the matter can harm the company's reputation, financial prosperity or legitimacy. In other words, strategic communication is about managing those key conversations that can harm a company's core business concept. A part of strategic communication is therefore also managing the perception of a company, particularly the notion of corporate hypocrisy. Fundamentally, the perception of corporate hypocrisy arises when a company claims

to be something it is not. The perception is strongest when a transgression or deceitful behaviour is taking place in the same domain as their core business.

During the analysis, the theoretical framework will be applied in order to answer the posed research questions and understand why the critique Facebook received in the German news media is important to pick up.

5. Methodology

The study seeks to investigate the situation concerning public critique which Facebook has to strategically navigate in German news media. The aim is to examine which topics and issues, in particular, are brought up against Facebook and how the language used has evolved over the last decade. The method of discourse analysis is introduced as well as the data collection, selection and analysis are explained.

The epistemological orientation followed in this study is social constructionism. Social constructionism premises on the denial “that our knowledge is a direct perception of reality. Instead, as a culture or society we construct our own versions of reality between us” (Burr, 2015, p.9). It argues that our perspective and understanding of the world comes from other people, and the objective reality is difficult to see and grasp yet still lingering. Language plays an integral role in social constructionism as the concepts and categories in which a person thinks are provided by the language we use. Therefore, language is a “necessary pre-condition for thought” (Burr, 2015, p.10), and determines how our experience and consciousness is structured. In that line of argument, the way newspapers write about Facebook construct their readers’ perception of the company and possibly their opinion.

In this research, the author is aware that the collection and selection process of the empirical data also constructs the reality of this study and depending on which articles are chosen, the outcome shows specific results. By providing transparency regarding the different processes during the collection and selection process as well as the analytical process, quality is ensured.

The research was carried out as a qualitative study using discourse analysis, with Facebook as the focal point. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the situation concerning public critique in German newspapers that Facebook has to navigate and how that critique has evolved.

Facebook was chosen because the company is one of the biggest tech and social media companies worldwide and has a great impact on society and the people in

general. Newspapers not only impact their readers with their reporting, editorial line and wording but simultaneously reflect the general societal perception of a topic, and in this case, how the company Facebook is perceived at that point in time. Therefore, understanding how Facebook is represented and reported about is an indicator of how the company is perceived in public and worth taking a closer look at.

5.1. Discourse Analysis

The method chosen for the study is the qualitative approach of discourse analysis, as it allows to analyse and examine the underlying patterns in language in different social settings (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002). The method permits the researcher to flexibly follow the discourse through time and examine its evolution.

Discourse analysis focuses on “the ways in which language constructs and mediates social and psychological realities” (Willig, 2014, p. 341). The analysis includes paying close attention to texts to examine how words were used to represent an event and its reality. It is based on the premise that the words we choose to articulate and how the words are spoken can shape how we make sense of the world and view our experience of it. Further, language is organised in discourses, and those, in turn, are constituted and dependent on the context in a historical, social and cultural sense (Willig, 2014).

The method of discourse analysis has evolved into several different approaches, such as critical discourse analysis by namely Fairclough or conversation analysis. These approaches vary in priorities and understanding of what a discourse constitutes and how it shapes the perception and experience. The origins of discourse analysis can be traced back to Foucault and his conviction that knowledge is not merely a reflection of reality. He defines discourse as follows:

We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation [...] made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined. Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form [...] it is, from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history [...] posing its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality. (Foucault 1972, p. 117)

Besides the actual written or spoken text, Foucault is interested in the “material conditions and social structures that form the context for these.”, as well as “the practices that are implicated in particular discourses” (Burr, 2015, p. 191).

Another characterisation of discourse is provided by Burr (2015) as a collection of metaphors, meanings, representations, stories, images and statements that combined in some form produce a distinct version of events. This refers to a distinct picture that is painted of “an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light” (Burr, 2015, p. 75).

The approach of discourse analysis taken in this study is influenced by the Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis and aspects of the conversation analysis. I am interested in how the language is used, how patterns can be identified, and how the context of the event influences the view on reality and representation.

For this research, a discourse is a reoccurring theme around the same topic of conversation. It is constituted of a collection of statements in newspaper articles. The written text, chosen language used, and underlying sentiment conveyed by the journalist provide the holistic perspective of the discourse. Further, a discourse is a reoccurring topic that is presented on all chosen platforms. It is something that is touched on and “circled back to” in the articles and is vital for the presentation of Facebook. There can be different opinions on the same topic, different language used, multiple perspectives presented, yet they all showcase the same discourse. There can also be various aspects stated that belong to the bigger picture, the discourse overall.

5.2. Research design

This study analyses articles from three main German outlets in the timeframe from Mai 2012 to June 2021. The details, transparency and methodological guidelines are explained and elaborated on in this chapter.

5.2.1. Data collection

For this study, texts from three main German outlets, namely CHIP, BILD and the Süddeutsche Zeitung (thereafter SZ), were chosen as the data format. These outlets were chosen as they have three different editorial lines, main focuses, and represent

the German newspaper landscape spectrum. The number of newspapers was consciously limited, as this allowed the analysis to be as detailed as possible in the timeframe given. Moreover, with a limited number of outlets, it is possible to follow the main conversations and discourses through time and take a closer look at every individual article and understand not only the content but what is said between the lines.

CHIP is one of the leading tech outlets in Germany, in print and online, and known for its help section. However, because CHIP did not have any articles for the IPO in 2012 that fulfil the requirements for the study, I decided to choose a second tech outlet, heise, also very well-known in Germany with a good reputation. BILD, the most read newspaper in Germany, is known for provocative language and scandals. To understand the situation constructed that Facebook needs to navigate, BILD is an essential part of the German newspaper landscape, shapes people's opinions and needs to be included in the study. Because BILD did not have enough articles during the last flashpoint, Spiegel was chosen as a second outlet. They are known for their thorough reporting and sometimes controversial representation of topics, similar to BILD. The SZ is a quality newspaper in Germany with a well-known reputation for sound journalistic reporting and high standards. Within the German media landscape, the SZ has gained respect for its many investigative reports and critical reporting.

The flashpoints chosen for the study were initially researched in Facebook's history and then examined if there is coverage in all three main outlets corresponding with the timeframe. The IPO in 2012 was chosen as the first flashpoint, as it marks an impactful moment in the company's history and brought much change for Facebook. Cambridge Analytica and the congress hearing were chosen as they mark the biggest scandal in Facebook's history to date; the leak in 2021 was chosen as it targets the same issue as in 2018 but with a different media reaction. For this study, it was key to concentrate on specific flashpoints, those with high potential of being harmful to Facebook's reputation and well-being, rather than random minor issues that do not pose any proper threat to the company. The selection speaks to the nature of strategic communication as it focuses on the key conversations about Facebook.

The specific requirements for the texts to be relevant for the study range from the timing of the article to the content and the format of articles. There are four flashpoints chosen as starting points for the collection period, which starts 1-2 days after the initial scandal broke the news and lasts for a maximum of two months

thereafter. The period was chosen to be appropriate concerning the scope of the study, its aim and purpose. For the second flashpoint, the scandal around Cambridge Analytica, an exception was made, as the third scandal, Zuckerberg's questioning by the US Congress is seen as an alone standing flashpoint and therefore cuts into the two months period. Another requirement is online access to all articles; this research did not include any print coverage or online articles that require payment.

Regarding the content of the articles, they needed to be articles and not short updates or news; also, they could not be written by dpa, the German news agency. Traditionally, dpa writes articles that get distributed and picked up by outlets without any changes or used as a starting point for their own writing. The latter was the case in some articles by CHIP. Moreover, no interviews with experts and other spokespeople by the outlets themselves were considered, as well as articles mainly about the companies owned by Facebook, such as WhatsApp and Instagram; they were only relevant when it concerned legal issues for Facebook. Further, especially for the tech outlets, no articles regarding tips and tricks were considered for the analysis.

During the first collection process, the requirements were set when I understood what type of article benefits the purpose of the study and which do not, i.e., articles written by dpa or "tips and tricks". By setting strict rules that can be understood and followed, transparency is provided throughout the collection and selection process.

The collection process was straightforward and the same for all flashpoints. The search took place on the websites themselves, the search words, as specified below, were entered, and if necessary, the timeframe was set. From there, all articles that fulfilled the requirements were opened and then carefully read. For each outlet, between five to seven articles were chosen for the analysis; therefore, after the initial reading, the selection began of which articles were best for the study. Indicators were the length, the content and the wording. The aim was to select those articles representing the outlet the best and "painted" the most holistic and accurate story throughout, including at least one opinion piece from the SZ for every flashpoint. Regarding the tech outlets, CHIP was chosen as the primary outlet to work with, but as it became apparent throughout the collection process, they either had only articles directly from dpa or no content in that timeframe at all, heise was chosen as a second outlet to enrich the data. Further, Spiegel was chosen to complete the data for the fourth flashpoint, as BILD only had a limited number of articles that fulfilled all requirements.

Flashpoint 1: Facebooks Initial Public Offering

Timeframe: 19.05.2012 – 19.07.2012

Search entry: SZ: Facebook; BILD: Facebook Börse; heise: Facebook Börse

In 2012, Facebook went public. Instead of the expected and promised good start on the stock market, the share plummeted directly after going public and could only recover weeks later. Above all, Facebook's advertising model was a cause for doubt.

Flashpoint 2: Cambridge Analytica

Timeframe: 18.03.2018 – 09.04.2018

Search entry: SZ: Facebook; BILD: Facebook Cambridge Analytica; CHIP: Facebook Cambridge Analytica

The scandal around Cambridge Analytica broke when it became public knowledge that 87 million Facebook users' data was used by the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica. The data first was gathered through an app in 2014, with Facebook learning about the breach and instructing to shut the app down in 2015.

Flashpoint 3: Zuckerberg's questioning in the US congress

Timeframe: 11.04.2018 – 10.06.2018

Search entry: SZ: Facebook; BILD: Facebook Kongress; CHIP: Facebook Kongress; heise: Facebook Kongress

After the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Mark Zuckerberg was asked to testify before congress and answer questions over two days to shed light on the situation and explain the company's plans to avoid similar breaches in the future. Zuckerberg also appeared before the European Parliament to answer questions, because European accounts were also compromised.

Flashpoint 4: New data leak from Facebook

Timeframe: 03.04.2021 – 03.06.2021

Search entry: SZ: Facebook; BILD: Facebook Zuckerberg, Facebook Datenleck, Facebook Wettbewerb; CHIP Facebook; heise: Facebook

In April 2021, the news broke that more than 533 million Facebook users' data had been leaked and consequently used for criminal schemes. The timeline and where the data came from is still unclear, as the timeline Facebook provided, and official documents do not align.

5.2.2. *Analytical Process*

For the data analysis, an abductive approach was used as for this approach, the empirical data serves as a starting point for the analytical process (Reichertz, 2014) and is aiming towards discovering new concepts, finding surprising results and phenomena that cannot be explained by existing knowledge (Kennedy, 2018). The abductive approach can be understood as a combination between a deductive and an inductive approach, meaning that the researcher will not solely rely on the theory-driven deductive or the data-based inductive approach but combine them (Patton, 2015). The abductive approach expects the researcher to work within a flexible research design, which is also consistent for the analysis, as the idea is to generate categories based on the collected data rather than placing data in already existing, pre-determined ones (Hammersley, 2013).

The analytical process is loosely based on Willig (2008) in the steps taken during the analysis. The analysis was conducted in multiples steps. Each outlet within a flashpoint was seen as an entity analysed as a whole. The first step was the initial reading, in which the article was read and examined from a language perspective where specific metaphors, words with negative connotations and figures of speech were marked. After the initial reading, the article was looked at again with the perspective of connections, phrases that stood out, as well as times where you could read “between the lines” were written down. After the language had been examined, the content was further analysed and understood which topics were touched on and in which context they are portrayed. The third step examines on which dimensions, such as legal, technical, social and ethical, the topics were discussed. These steps were repeated for all of the articles within the outlet. Everything was written down and arranged systematically to gain an overview of what was found in the articles. This analysis was repeated throughout the different flashpoints and outlets. Finally, the notes were examined to achieve a holistic overview of which topics and themes, discourses, are reoccurring throughout the articles and how the language was used, and which changes are apparent.

5.2.3. Ethical considerations and reflections

As the literature also highlighted, Germans tend to be more careful about their data than other citizens in the EU or the U.S.; I am one of those Germans that try to be aware of how my data is used. I try to disable all personalised advertisements and reject cookies. However, I do have a Facebook account, and like many others, I am using it to stay in contact with friends, know what is going on in other people's lives, and simply because everyone in my generation still has an account. All outlets have been chosen for the aforementioned reasons; I am not a frequent reader of any of them and have no other affiliation to them.

Methodological reflections

During the collection process, I realised how important the selection of the articles is and how much the selection contributes to the study's overall results and the construction of reality created by the media and myself.

The discourse analysis allowed me, unlike a content analysis, to follow the different discourses and follow them through time. With a content analysis, I would have to adhere to a stricter code book and count the times Zuckerberg is mentioned rather than in which context Zuckerberg is mentioned and how his persona is constructed in the bigger picture. Therefore, with the discourse analysis, I was able to not only examine the content but the language and the entire context of how words were used. With a content analysis and tools to help with the analysis, more articles could have been analysed, yet I believe that the purpose of the study, the underlying tone, and reoccurring themes and topics would not have been captured as accurate as it was with a discourse analysis.

However, as a researcher, I was aware that I influence and curate the perception and creation of a narrative through the selection process and following analysis.

6. Analysis

This chapter aims at showcasing the empirical data and how it can be connected with the theoretical framework. The detected discourses of Zuckerberg, the business model, Facebook's power and the lack of transparency are discussed. Further, a closer look is dedicated towards journalistic developments and linguistic observations.

6.1. Overall assessment

The study examines multiple aspects of how Facebook is portrayed in the German news media and which critique points are brought up. This serves as an overview of what could be found in the outlets themselves overall, which holistic observations could be made for all four flashpoints, and on which dimensions the conversations were held.

The tech outlet, CHIP, presented several articles with substantial correspondence from dpa, which is why for the first and last flashpoint, only heise as the technical outlet was chosen because CHIP had no articles that fit all the requirements. They rarely wrote about Mark Zuckerberg himself, if at all, more in his position as Facebook's founder and CEO, rather than going into detail about his persona and private life. For the fourth flashpoint heise had just enough articles written by their own staff, but the interest in the topic and the "new scandal" seemed to have worn off for this outlet, while CHIP presented no articles fitting all requirements.

For both CHIP and heise, they had a clear focus on the technical side of Facebook and the consequences of what data collection and personalised targeting means. Moreover, they also touch on the legal aspect of data privacy, and which rights the users have. The financial and economic dimensions are briefly addressed.

BILD, the most read paper in Germany, stayed true to its reputation and showed throughout all four flashpoints a clear focus on Zuckerberg, not only in his function as Facebook's CEO but also his private life and his persona itself. Further, most articles were informational with a personal take on the situation but not in an analytical way. Towards the last flashpoints, BILD showed less interest in the company Facebook and

their scandals, as for the congress there were only a few articles that fit all the requirements, for the last flashpoint, the latest data leak, Spiegel had to be incorporated as a second outlet as BILD did not publish enough articles in the timeframe regarding Facebook.

There was a clear focus on Zuckerberg as a person and his position, the legal aspect of Facebook and the related lawsuits that Facebook was facing. Further, BILD wrote about the societal and political consequences of Facebook on a broad spectrum. More often, they also address the economic aspect regarding the stock market, Zuckerberg's assets and Facebook's overall financial position.

The last outlet, the SZ, presented the most in-depth coverage regarding Facebook and its scandals. They took an analytical approach, showcased different perspectives of the same topic and published multiple opinion pieces which not always showed the same opinion. The clear distinction between article and opinion piece became harder to distinguish as the articles in 2018 and 2021 were written with a clear underlying connotation detected in the analysis. The SZ wrote about Facebook right after the scandals broke and kept analysing how the situation evolved and how society is impacted. Nevertheless, as observed with the other outlets, towards the last flashpoint, the number of articles published by the SZ reduced noticeably, and the latest data leak is not as discussed and covered as the previous ones.

The SZ approaches Facebook from a societal and public perspective and is foremost asking and examining what Facebook means for society, what consequences the business model has on the public and what the bigger picture looks like. More often, the economic dimension is touched, but not in great detail; similar attention is paid to the technical and legal dimensions, which occasionally are mentioned but more in an add-on capacity.

6.2. The four discourses

The discourses, defined as a collection of statements in the German newspaper articles, which are reoccurring and conveying an underlying sentiment towards Facebook, that were found and further discussed in the analysis are the following:

- Facebook's CEO and founder, Mark Zuckerberg

- Facebook’s business model
- Facebook’s power
- Facebook’s lack of transparency

The first discourse detected in the data is the portrayal of Facebook’s CEO and founder, Mark Zuckerberg. First and foremost, it is apparent that the outlets rarely write the full name and prefer to call him by his surname, Zuckerberg. The portrait of Zuckerberg has changed from the IPO in 2012 to the latest data leak in 2021. Back in 2012, they described him as a young, resourceful entrepreneur in a hoodie but also as a “gambler” who was after big money and made “reckless business decisions” (IPO, SZ 4) from time to time and follows “the urge for quick money” (IPO, BILD 3). The words chosen to describe Zuckerberg, his urge and greed for money, and simultaneously making reckless decisions implicate the perception that he tends to carelessness. Nevertheless, overall, the reporting about him was relatively slim and concise, which changed in 2018 with the scandal around Cambridge Analytica.

BILD even dedicated an entire article to just his person and his life; they detail his age and upbringing, his wife and their hobbies, his finances and wealth. They further describe that he goes for a weekly run because he is “a bit chubby” (CA, BILD 4). Zuckerberg is defined as the face of and brain behind Facebook who has two sides to him, the genius that changed the world with his codes but also one of the most feared people in the world, as they put it: "Is he the computer genius who wants to save the world, or Frankenstein from Facebook?" (CA, BILD 4).

Like BILD, the SZ also characterised Zuckerberg, particularly during the congressional hearing in 2018. He is described to possess the “Conqueror gene” (congress, SZ 1), paired with a friendly appearance, without which he would have never made it thus far. The gene constitutes someone to “be willing to cross borders, wipe obstacles off tables and pull friends over the same” (congress, SZ 1). In the same breath, the author draws a connection to Zuckerberg’s past, in which he has “tapped ruthlessly” the knowledge and ideas of others for his own gain as they conclude that “after all, he became great by disregarding it” (congress, SZ 1). This sentiment of how he has operated in the past is also picked up in another article stating: “Basically nothing has changed since then, apart from the fact that he no longer harms individual female students” (congress, SZ 4), which plays at the beginning of Facebook, as a website to rate female Harvard students. Further, it is questioned whether Zuckerberg

is the right person for the next phase of Facebook's, for the "democratisation" of the company (congress, SZ 1). Lastly, Zuckerberg seems to have adopted a pattern of apologising every couple of months without changing Facebook's policies and regulations. The frustrations about how Zuckerberg is able to do it for so long is depicted in a very telling depiction of his understanding of what an apology is and what it needs to be sincere.

But that the apology can only ever be granted by someone else, the one who has been harmed; that the speech act of apology only has a truthful effect if the one apologising actually feels something like guilt (hashtag regret and remorse) - all this would probably not even occur to Zuckerberg. (congress, SZ 4)

The author implicates with this sentence that Zuckerberg is incapable of emotions like regret and remorse, and his apology is therefore worthless. He continues to explain, while the apologies cannot be seen as sincere, they work for the shareholders, and Facebook's stock prices go up whenever Zuckerberg is apologising in public. These quotes show an overall underlying sentiment during the 2018 reporting about Zuckerberg that he is neither sincere nor has changed his business mentality. Interestingly, during the latest data leak in 2021, Zuckerberg is merely mentioned as Facebook's CEO and founder in a casual fashion, but no in-depth pieces about him, no characterisation of his are written.

To look at how Zuckerberg is portrayed in the media through the theoretical lens of corporate hypocrisy, two aspects of corporate hypocrisy after Wagner et al. (2020) stand out, the behavioural hypocrisy and hypocrisy attributions. The key signs are shown during the Cambridge Analytica scandal as well as the congress hearing. The SZ dedicated an entire article to prove whether Zuckerberg is telling the truth and concludes that of three statements of his, two are lies (congress, SZ 6). Further, the conviction of Zuckerberg that building the community and creating harmony is his priority is not in line with his actions. He presents himself as a "resistance fighter" (CA, SZ 6) against the shareholders and his own advertisement department, favouring the community and the best possible product. This being said, the author points out that based on his actions, Zuckerberg is "so far unwilling to give up even a fraction of the valuable mountain of data" (CA, SZ 3). It continues suggesting that Zuckerberg

does not want to give up his data as it means power which in turn means money, therefore well-being, harmony, and community is not his self-proclaimed priority.

The inconsistency between word and action is a clear sign of behavioural hypocrisy, as it is defined as “the belief that statements made by a firm deviate from its behavior” (Wagner et al., 2020, p. 388). With Zuckerberg saying that his first priority is the community and advancing the platform for the best user experience and publicly positioning himself against the money and advertising strategies, he contradicts the company’s actions. When looked at the privacy policies and how the company has conducted business, there is no change in sight which suggests that Zuckerberg is not prepared to give up on some part of the data for the user’s privacy.

The other facet of corporate hypocrisy detected in the data about Zuckerberg is the hypocrisy attribution after Wagner et al. (2020) “an individual’s personal judgement that a firm is hypocritical by its nature” (p. 388). The equalisation between Zuckerberg and Facebook as a company is highly important for this aspect, as BILD proclaims that the trust in Zuckerberg and his honesty is lost, and his promises cannot be trusted. The intentions and motives behind Zuckerberg’s actions are additionally questioned by the SZ in their statement that "Zuckerberg once wanted to bring people together on a worldwide, free platform" (CA, SZ 3). By choosing the wording of “once” and “wanted” the author suggests that this is not the case anymore and Zuckerberg has a different vision nowadays, which is a theme throughout the reporting of Cambridge Analytica and the congress hearing. Further, they analyse that Zuckerberg is losing himself in his own narrative of connecting people for whatever cost. “Connecting more and more people, growing more and more - this obsession triumphs over ethical concerns” (CA, SZ 6). The context of triumph and ethical concerns implicates that once, sometime prior, ethical concerns were significant, but the “obsession” (in GER: “Obsession”) with connecting more people concretely also means more data and more data means more money. Therefore, Zuckerberg, as the CEO and founder and soul of Facebook, cannot be trusted, and his intentions do not seem to be genuine, which is in line with the hypocrisy attributions after Wagner et al. (2020).

The second discourse detected in the data is Facebook’s business model. The perception of the business model and its portrayal can be seen as the greatest change in sentiment. During the IPO in 2012, there was an underlying sentiment of doubt about Facebook’s business model and how that would be incorporated in the mobile

version, which was new at that point. What is consistent, however, is the belief in Facebook being more illusion than reality, as heise writes “They were tempted by the hype surrounding Facebook, but it was basically clear from the start that the social network's profit prospects were not so promising” (IPO, heise 2). The fall of the stock value was seen as a sign of reality settling back in and that Facebook is not the “all-round salvation as assumed by many” (IPO, heise 2). During the Cambridge Analytica scandal, the connotation and the understanding of the business model changed from doubting the success of personalised advertising to possessing too much power over the collected data for personalised ads. The model is described in different ways, but all three outlets are unanimous in their belief that the users' trust is the vital part of Facebook combined with the data collection and targeted advertisement. When faced with public critique, BILD describes Facebook's response as follows “collect data until you hit a limit and then backpaddle a little or just fake it” (CA, BILD 3). The SZ is even more explicit and convinced that data privacy would threaten the entire system as they title “the user is not only a consumer but also a supplier of personal information” (CA, SZ 2). In that sense, they identify the dual role of the users, they are consuming Facebook and therefore also the advertisements and simultaneously supply Facebook with personal data to place the ads as personalised as possible.

Through Cambridge Analytica, it became more apparent that Facebook's business model is the problem in the equation. “The problem with this scandal is that it is not based on data theft but on Facebook's normal business” (CA, SZ 3). What was already stated during the scandal around Cambridge Analytica was also focused on when reporting about the congress hearing. The SZ formulated clearly that data privacy and Facebook's business model does not go together as “the platform has perfected the collection of detailed data points” (congress, SZ 3) and is not willing to give up on the data to preserve its users' privacy. As already seen with Zuckerberg, during the latest scandal surrounding the data leak in 2021, the business model is taken as it is, not commented on in detail or paid any significant attention.

In this discourse, the facets of behavioural hypocrisy and hypocrisy attribution after Wagner et al. (2020) can be found. As with Zuckerberg prior, when talking about the platform, Facebook's official priority is to perfect the product according to their users' wishes and their experience for the long-term goal rather than the short-time financial benefit of the shareholder. However, as the SZ points out, the model is “more and more refined for the benefit of its shareholders” (CA, SZ 6), which directly

contrasts the public and official goals and principles of Facebook. The discrepancy between the official presentation and the company's actual actions enables the perception of behavioural hypocrisy to grow and develop.

The aspect of hypocrisy attribution is apparent in the characterisation of Facebook as “data monster” (congress, CHIP 4, in GER “Datenkrake”) and them “gambling away trust” (congress, CHIP 4), which implies an active part of Facebook in the matter. They have “gambled away too much goodwill already”, and the trust from the users in the platform is gone because they have treated their data poorly (congress, CHIP 4). This loss of trust in the company itself supports the hypocrisy attribution as the intentions, and the motives are questioned and hint at moral hypocrisy after Wagner et al. (2020).

The third discourse apparent is the power Facebook possesses and the expectations paired with that. Right before the IPO, there was a lot of pressure put on Facebook to perform well on the stock market and meet expectations. When the IPO did not go as planned, and the value of the company’s shares fell, a broader picture was drawn. The expectations of Facebook were transferred to the rest of the Web 2.0, and if Facebook crashes, then there is no viable future for companies and start-ups just like Facebook. Heise characterises Facebook’s crash as follows: “Not only is Facebook on its way to dismantling itself, but the social media giant could take large parts of the rest of the ad-supported web down with it right now” (IPO, heise 4).

The SZ also lays heavy on the importance of Facebook during the IPO, and what that means for the whole web with phrases like: “Greatest achievement since the internet existed” (IPO, SZ 1), it was supposed to be a “symbol of the great breakout from the crisis” (IPO, SZ 3), or “They have robbed a hopeful stock. This is bitter for the stock exchange system, for the USA as a business location and the Internet community” (IPO, SZ 3). With this phrasing, it is not only made clear that the IPO was a big deal to Facebook but also showcases how vital and ground-breaking Facebook was for the entire internet community, and in some form, also foreshadowing of how powerful Facebook would become in the future. Nonetheless, when reading BILD articles about the IPO, next to the sentiment of shock about the share value dropping, a sobering undertone can be read through the lines that it might not be too bad for Facebook to fail initially with the IPO, which can also be seen as foreshadowing for the critical perspective put on Facebook in the coming years.

The tone of what Facebook means to the internet community has changed drastically from the IPO in 2012 to the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018. At that point, Facebook is seen as a very powerful and influential company, not only in northern America but worldwide, “In many parts of the world, Facebook is synonymous with the internet” (CA, SZ 1). The company has not only gained a reputation as, “one of the most powerful corporations on the internet” (CA, SZ 3), but the link between money, data and users is also synonymous with Facebook. The SZ describes the combination as “Users, and their data are power, and power is money” (CA, SZ 3).

Another aspect of power is Zuckerberg’s portrayal as the role of the “state builder” (CA, SZ 6) or a monarch (CA, SZ 6). It is elaborated that he gave himself the role but simultaneously was also pushed into it by the outside influences because there is no thought-out concept of regulating the company. They showcase two sides of his, the monarch, responsible for the community and experience of the users and the entrepreneur, responsible for the shareholders and day-to-day business working smoothly. They state that he presents himself as “a king that supports his subjects from the capitalist predators - a skewed view of a publicly traded company” (CA, SZ 6); the wording suggests that the author does not believe in the sincerity of Zuckerberg’s presentation. Another recurring theme corresponding with Facebook and its power is the responsibility that comes with it and the lack of knowledge of the latter on Facebook’s and Zuckerberg’s part. “With power as the most important global communication platform comes responsibility” (CA, SZ 6). A phrase like that is always followed by explaining that neither Zuckerberg nor his team were aware of it when they started the company and grew, developed and evolved it the following years.

Throughout the congress, the same sentiment and underlying tone that Facebook has become very powerful carry through. Interestingly, while it can be read that Facebook is very powerful, only with the latest data leak in 2021, the SZ is issuing that the company has become too powerful, which is a sentiment that might have been implied but not written out before. With phrasing like “Facebook is too powerful”, “controlling four massive communication platforms” and posing the question of “Who writes the rules on the internet?” (leak, SZ 3), it is clear that the SZ believes that Facebook has become too influential for one company. Part of this is also that there is still no proper control body for Facebook. Here again, the comparison between Facebook and a state is drawn and highlighted that “Mark Zuckerberg is not a

democratically legitimised head of government” (leak, SZ 3). Going back to the enormous responsibility Facebook possesses, the SZ is convinced with their business model and power, “this is how the company keeps the unpleasant sides of the internet going” (leak, SZ 2). The overall underlying sentiment throughout the congress, as well as the data leak reporting, suggests the notion that the bigger Facebook becomes, who is setting the rules and controlling them?

The fourth and last discourse examined in the study is the constant intransparency by Facebook. While it was a by-product during the IPO and the coverage was more focused on the fall of the stock value, the selected communication about the IPO and the sharing with only a few shareholders was partly criticised. The SZ viewed the intransparency by Facebook during the Cambridge Analytica scandal as the biggest scandal of all, which is apparent through a constant undertone in their articles of how Facebook is not sharing information with the public “in this case, too, the company was publicly hesitant to inform” (CA, SZ 1). They continue claiming that Facebook is not informing the public about the developments of which data was collected and used, where it came from and who is affected and that a fundamental change is necessary as at the moment, they “fail daily to seriously inform customers about it” (CA, SZ 2). The wording suggests a degree of frustration, and the reoccurring use of words like “again” or “nothing new”, implicates that this is a theme for Facebook, and the journalists are tired of it. “At least those users who are affected by the Cambridge Analytica data scandal should be informed” (CA, SZ 5). This is also coherent with the eventual win that Facebook agreed to inform those affected by the data breach, yet one cannot help but read through the lines and detect the frustration about this small but vital step. While the SZ is writing in detail about the lack of transparency by Facebook, BILD is also picking it up and mentioning it in their articles, yet not in as much depth as the SZ does.

During the congress hearing, the theme of Zuckerberg, as Facebook’s voice, unwilling to answer certain questions and becoming very good at dodging the important ones, became apparent. The latest data leak in 2021 has resurfaced the intransparency by Facebook as they do not seem to be forthcoming with information about what happened and in which order things unfolded. Heise is confident that Facebook has no interest in helping to investigate the situation: “Instead of helping to clarify the circumstances of the latest data leak, which affected more than 500 million users, Facebook is only causing more confusion” (leak, heise 1).

While the lack of transparency is addressed as a big problem, it is also presented as normal for Facebook, and there is no surprise about how Facebook is handling this type of situation. BILD further claims that Facebook is acting like usual as they plan to “continue to remain silent and just wait out the situation” (leak, BILD 3). They are also working with headlines that directly target Facebook’s lack of communication by naming articles “Facebook expects more data leaks - and wants to keep quiet about it” (leak, BILD 3). The choice of words suggests that this is the situation everyone is in, and there is nothing one can do about it except for accepting that the company is unwilling to share information with the public.

While heise and BILD address the intransparency by Facebook, the SZ dives deeper and elaborates how that lack of communication influences the trust users have in Facebook and how that is broken. A big part of their reporting about the leak is the lost trust and the broken promises that were made years back. This representation is in line with the behavioural hypocrisy after Wagner et al. (2020), as the SZ underlying tone is about actions and words not fitting together. “Zuckerberg has long ago broken the promise he made when he took over the company seven years ago” (leak, SZ 3), is written when talking about What’s App and the regulation between data transfers between both apps, which corresponds with their uncertainty of “it is unclear how long Facebook will continue to respect the guidelines” (leak, SZ 3).

Overall, the discourses of Zuckerberg, the business model and Facebook in power and the lack of transparency have shifted over the years of reporting, but none of them in a traditional way. While Zuckerberg has been put in the front and centre of Facebook and most of the coverage about the company, he has become recognised as one of the most influential and powerful men worldwide as well as someone whose word cannot be trusted, and it is advised to rather follow his actions than his words. The reporting about the business model took one of the biggest turns, from doubted in 2012 if targeted advertising has a future to Facebook’s key problem with the media. The expectations put on Facebook have grown over the years, and the power Facebook possesses has changed from being admired to being feared with no clear control body in place. Corresponding with the company’s power is also their ability to operate with selected communication and little willingness to speak with the public, which is frustrating but also accepted as normal.

6.3. The journalistic developments

This chapter takes a closer look at how the journalistic aspect of the coverage has changed in the time between the IPO in 2012 and the leak in 2021. Attention is paid to the overall impression of the articles, the themes within the words chosen and language used, and rhetorical aspects such as irony, sarcasm and negative connotations.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the intensity and tone of the reporting has shifted between 2012 and 2021. One theme, which has not been discussed before, is Facebook's financial interest, and that is touched on in most articles, sometimes in one to two sentences, or it is drawn out further, but the focus of that topic has not changed. When discussing the money, the stock market or the advertisement gains, the money is always drawn back to Zuckerberg, and his personal wealth, how any change of the company impacts his share in the company and his consequent financial gain or loss. The topic of money is neither brought up in a positive nor negative light; it is simply a constant aspect of the company and Zuckerberg's interests that are part of the underlying tone of the reporting.

When Facebook became part of the stock market there were existing doubts about its business model vision, which the drop of the share only heightened. Heise labelled Facebook's hope to rise on the stock market again a "Herculean task" (IPO, heise 4), and BILD called the IPO "messed up." (IPO, BILD 3). Placing ads on mobile phones was not common in 2012, and Facebook had only started with perfecting their access to people's private data. The SZ doubted Facebook's future and described their heightened media presence right before the IPO as "from spectacular IPO to spectacular crash" (IPO, SZ 2). The choice of words indicates not only doubt and the realisation that it is a big task for Facebook to come back from such a drastic fall on the stock market but also that they might have set their goal too high and need to pay the consequences now. The overall tone of the reporting was critical and leaning towards negativity. However, the number of articles was as expected; there were enough articles written to choose the most poignant ones for the study yet also not too many forcing cutting out articles that would have been valuable to the study and the results.

The Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018 showed a very different side of the media attention and reporting about Facebook. From the start, it was easily detectable that the tone of the reporting has changed from mostly critical towards purely

accusatory and astonishment of how this could happen. While Cambridge Analytica was throughout all outlets described as “dubious”, Facebook has been made out as the real culprit in this case. The question constantly posed, in a critical and in an accusatory manner is, why Facebook was so quickly satisfied with the company’s concessions and never checked it. The phrase used throughout is along the lines of “Zuckerberg, however, was satisfied with their assurances and did not double-check” (CA, BILD 7). With the sense of disbelief also came a sobering sense of Facebook as a whole. That is portrayed through comments like “did not even have to trick at all” (CA, SZ 3), alluding that what Cambridge Analytica did was unconventional, but the app used to extract the data was completely legal and abode by Facebook’s rules and regulations, which the SZ comments “The naivety is frightening in retrospect” (CA, SZ 6).

Another theme that can be read through the language is that it is a never-ending story for Facebook, and there is no end in sight. Heise writes, “the air is getting tighter for Facebook” (CA, heise 2) and “there is no end to the bad news for Facebook” (CA, heise 2), implying that this is only the beginning and there is a long road ahead until good news come for Facebook. BILD is painting the picture of a world breaking down with the “data suction” (CA, BILD 2, in GER: “Datensaugerei”), posing the question “Is the perfect world coming apart?” (CA, BILD 1), insinuating that before the scandal, everything was perfect and now they have to fight to get back to where they used to be.

The SZ is portraying a similar picture to heise as their reoccurring rhetorical theme is that the situation is developing in an unfortunate direction, with phrases like “now the storm is brewing” (CA, SZ 6) and “spiral of bad news” (CA, SZ 7) or “Facebook is struggling to put out the fire” (CA, SZ 7). They draw attention to the fact that this is not the first scandal Facebook is facing, “The case is just the latest in a string of scandals that have severely damaged Facebook's public image badly” (CA, SZ 1). Overall, it can be said, during the Cambridge Analytica scandal, the reporting became more opinionated and negative, the notion of a never-ending story came through and the sobering sentiment of what Facebook is and how they operate.

This development of the journalistic style continued during the congress hearing with a clear focus on Zuckerberg, how he spoke and presented himself. The level of frustration about the company and their processes is increasing, and the trust in Facebook seems to be entirely gone. While CHIP is disappointed that the senators “unfortunately didn’t manage” (congress, CHIP 2) to pin down a concrete answer from

Zuckerberg to any question, BILD did not show any surprise about Zuckerberg's hesitation to answer questions properly, "Zuckerberg answers - but simply inadequately" (congress, BILD 5). They show further frustration how easy it seems to be for Zuckerberg to evade questions in congress by describing the process as an "easy game" and "easy to dodge" (congress, BILD 5). BILD stresses, "Nevertheless, Zuckerberg said "sorry" again at the beginning" (congress, BILD 5), but never continued to expand on what he means or answers questions directly.

Like BILD, the SZ is frustrated with how easy it is for Zuckerberg to evade answering and presenting himself in a favourable light; they call his positive presentation "cheap victory" (congress, SZ 1), insinuating that it is not worth much. They are also calling for someone to do something against Facebook, "Can't someone finally smash Facebook or, better still, divest it?" (congress, SZ 4). The SZ continues to be excited about the prospect that "citizens finally debate the regulation of IT corporations" (congress, SZ 2) and therefore try to highlight that it is important to have those conversations in public.

Next to the frustration about Zuckerberg, and the seemingly effortless time he has in front of congress, ethical questions are also posed openly more often throughout the coverage about the congress. CHIP, for example, is talking about the end-product of the data which Facebook is selling and explains it by drawing a comparison to espionage and stating that in "Intelligence slang" (congress, CHIP 3), the data is a product of "surveillance and reconnaissance" (congress, CHIP 3) which is the most desired kind of data and is worth more than the raw data. By drawing this type of connection, CHIP is insinuating that Facebook is operating similarly to the Intelligence industry. They further state that Facebook is in the position of reconstructing its users' life which "raises numerous ethical questions" (congress, CHIP 3), and their "dominance is almost frightening" (congress, CHIP 4).

The SZ is questioning Facebooks' ethical side by posing the question about the privacy policies "How can users give their consent when not even Zuckerberg seems to know?" (congress, SZ 6), which can be read in an accusatory manner and with a sense of frustration about how the company is run and what is expected from its users. Interesting was that there was a reasonable number of articles published about Facebook and the congress hearing, but not as many as during the Cambridge Analytica scandal, and CHIP and heise both only mentioned the hearing in passing,

which suggests that only a couple of weeks after the initial scandal the interest and the media attention died down.

This trend can also be witnessed during the latest leak in 2021, when only a handful of articles were published about Facebook, let alone the leak itself. The normalisation of things, Facebook's data breaches and no changes can also be found in the language used to write about Facebook. While heise is stating that this is Facebook's "latest data leak" (leak, heise 1), BILD is making sure that their readers are aware that "This is not the first scandal involving user data for which Facebook has been criticised" (leak, BILD 1). Both statements suggest a strong leaning towards the sentiment of "here-we-go-again", and this is just what Facebook does and no one is surprised or even angered at this point. This can also be observed in SZ's writing about the leak as multiple paragraphs start with words like "Once again" (leak, SZ 2) that insinuate a sentiment of this is nothing new, and apprehension about the situation.

Another facet of the normalisation in the language is also the sense that nothing will change, which is made visible through expressions such as "has so far been met with great resistance on Facebook" (leak, heise 5) when talking about changes to privacy policies or "Facebook promises improvement, but ultimately does not really change anything" (leak, heise 5). That there is no trust in Facebook, especially regarding children and teenagers, is made clear by Spiegel "Facebook has already failed in the past to ensure the welfare of children on its platforms" (leak, Spiegel 5). One of the most explicit statements is provided by BILD when stating, "In simple terms: Facebook shifts the blame away from itself and wants users to accept that their data is not safe" (leak, BILD 3). That statement expresses the sentiment and understanding of Facebook, how they operate and what can be expected by the company. The way the sentence is written, and the words chosen signal that this is not a surprise and that there will be no change of processes.

Overall, it can be observed that the intensity in which outlets are writing about Facebook goes through different stages. During the IPO, the coverage was rather straightforward, and the language used was spiked with negative connotations. This shifted to a clear critical sentiment with the Cambridge Analytica scandal, during which the outlets wrote far more than to any other time examined in the study. The critical voice continued throughout the congress hearing, and an accusatory tone is further shining through. The intensity of coverage was not as great as with the Cambridge Analytica scandal. The decrease in intensity and out-cry about Facebook's

processes and operations can be detected during the leak in 2021, in which the number of articles published about Facebook was even below the number during the IPO, and the articles were only partly about the leak. Therefore, one can say that the journalistic reporting of Facebook has died down, and the normalisation of the company's business model and operations seems to have been accepted by society and journalists.

6.3.1. Linguistic observations

Throughout the reporting, there was a clear tendency towards using words with a negative connotation when describing Facebook, their product or how they are behaving holistically. During the IPO, words such as "Exploitation" (IPO, heise 2) or "sloppy" and "miserable" (IPO, heise 3) were used to describe the situation and handling of it. BILD named it "devastating" (IPO, BILD 6, in GER: "verheerend"), and the share was more or less a "junk paper" (IPO, BILD 2, in GER: "Ramschpapier") and called the IPO a "stock market dodger" (IPO, BILD 6). What stood out about the reporting about the IPO throughout all outlets was the use of the word "botched" (in GER: "verpatzt") which has a rather negative connotation in German but also has a "child-like" undertone and makes somewhat light and maybe also fun of the situation.

During the Cambridge Analytica scandal, CHIP wrote about how Facebook is deleting its "Delete Account"-Button, which in turn means that a user cannot easily delete their account anymore and phrase it in their title and the article as Facebook "locks users in" (CA, CHIP 5). The SZ is talking about "data jumble" (CA, SZ 2, in GER: "Datenwust") and characterises the apps used in the scandal as "supposedly harmless" (CA, SZ 2), suggesting a deceitful action. When discussing the congress hearing, the SZ describes the situation as a "torpedo" (congress, SZ 2) to Facebook's reputation. The beginning of Facebook as a platform is also brought up and labelled as "sexist Hot-or-Not-Page" (congress, SZ 4). It is important to remember words with a negative connotation shape the underlying tone of an article, how a reader perceives the piece, and possibly forms their opinion on the topic. The choice of words can be subtle; it does not have to be the big dramatic words that stand out to the reader but the smaller, more casual words with a negative connotation that have a lasting impact without possibly realising that at first.

One interesting rhetorical finding is the underlying tone of mockery, irony and sarcasm throughout the reporting, increasing during the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the congress hearing. While heise wrote about Facebook that the IPO was as effective as “standing on your head and wiggle your feet” (IPO, heise 4), BILD titled the development of the share value “from Face”boom” to Face”blubb”” (IPO, BILD 6). You can also read the underlying mockery in the SZ when they are writing about the Cambridge Analytica scandal and how Facebook has waited a couple of days in the hopes of the news blowing over, “Facebook can’t hope anymore that the next one is being dragged through the mud now” (CA, SZ 7, in GER: “Facebook kann jetzt nicht mehr hoffen, dass schon bald eine neue Sau durchs Dorf getrieben wird.”). They also comment on how the company was hoping this information would not come to light and argue they should know better and be straightforward in this situation, and not give out information slowly. “Everything means everything, because - where would one know better than at the communication platform Facebook - in the networked world, little remains secret” (CA, SZ 7).

During the congress hearing, a photographer took a picture of Zuckerberg’s notes for the hearing and BILD commented on this that “even offline, he showed his hand” (congress, BILD 4, in GER: “ließ sich auch noch offline ganz einfach in die Karten gucken”). They further express irony in Zuckerberg not being able to protect his users’ data as he is “he is not very protective of his own data either” (congress, BILD 4), going back to his notes for the hearing. It is described how Facebook is plagued with “little scandals” (congress, SZ 1, in GER: “Skandälchen”), making them sound unimportant and irrelevant to the reader, but at the same time, they are making fun of the fact that Facebook is constantly involved scandals, either small or great. When Zuckerberg’s personal data was also leaked in the latest leak in 2021, the SZ wrote, “Yes, so that's how it feels, Mister Zuckerberg!” (leak, SZ 2), reading the satisfaction through the lines that the journalist is somewhat happy about Zuckerberg being a victim of this scandal himself. These are only some examples of mocking throughout the reporting about Facebook, which is especially apparent in the later years when the “golden-child” Facebook is involved in many reputation-threatening scandals, and the frustrations seems to be at a high.

6.4. Navigating public critique

This study poses the question of which situation concerning public critique Facebook has to strategically navigate in German news media. This section aims at detecting a possible communication strategy behind Zuckerberg's and Facebook's communication with the public, portrayed through the media.

While there is not much to be said about the communication by Facebook after the IPO, more can be said about what came after. During the beginning phases of Cambridge Analytica, Zuckerberg decided not to speak out and waited for almost a week before approaching the media in a tactical manner, with interviews published and TV appearances coming out all on one evening. He is rather firm and secure in his argumentation that he and his company's team were not aware of the magnitude of Facebook and the consequences that can follow. "Zuckerberg seems to have become unaware of his own power, as well as the responsibility that comes with power" (CA, SZ 3). Another observation can be made, that although the trust has been decreasing in Facebook and Zuckerberg as its founder and CEO, Zuckerberg is still asking his users to trust him "Just trust me anyways!" (CA, SZ 6), insinuating that he is aware of the decreasing trust in him but confident in himself and his product to continue to portray a sense of calmness and security. Throughout the congress hearing, it became apparent that apologising is a communication facet Zuckerberg likes to use to appeal to the public and portray himself as a human that also makes mistakes. "Zuckerberg says sorry every few months, combined with the promise to make everything excellent from now on" (congress, SZ 4).

Further, the material suggests that Zuckerberg is aware of how he and his company come across as, according to the SZ, and he was able to leave a mark in the EU parliament hearing of who he is: "The last image that remained in memory was one that the billionaire himself had thrown into the round: the one of the college student who has a great business idea in his dorm" (congress, SZ 8). This, combined with his notion to apologise, not only shows that Zuckerberg knows how to present himself, but that he wants the public to view him as the genius who is still just a human making mistakes and vowing to do it better next time.

Interestingly, the notion not to pay much attention to public outcries is a theme for Facebook, noticeable through the late reaction during the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018 and the latest data leak in 2021, where the company decided to not

speak on it at all. Unfortunately for Facebook, an internal memo got out to an outlet stating precisely that, that they are strategically not interacting concerning breaches and leaks, aiming for them to become the new normal and industry-standard. In that regard, they seem to be aware of how powerful the company is and know that they can easily sit out interacting with the media. “But like the Cambridge Analytica affair or other data leaks and scandals, Facebook will sit out this brief storm of media and social media outrage” (leak, SZ 3).

As the data shows, Facebook seems to adhere to a communication strategy based on public apologies, targeted and placed statements and mindful presentation of Zuckerberg’s persona. It further seems to be constituted by the conscious selection of occasions when to speak out, on which topics to speak out on and whom to address in the public statements.

6.5. Strategic communication context

The previous parts of the analysis have placed the priority on corporate hypocrisy and how these facets can be found in Facebook’s case. This section aims at looking at the bigger picture and analyse how and why this situation is of importance to strategic communication, defined after Zerfass et al. (2018).

The main discourses found in the material directly address their founder and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, which turns conversations about him into, especially those that take place in the public, a strategic matter. The same can be said about the discourse about Facebook’s lack of transparency, as this can be understood as a direct threat to their perception of trust and their reputation, and those qualities are part of the organisation levels described by Zerfass et al. (2018) as intangible assets.

Additionally, part of the complexity of strategic communication is the ever-changing landscape with its different drivers, technological evolutions and influences, which is particularly vital in Facebook’s case. The public and societal perception of data privacy and its importance have changed (“citizens finally debate the regulation of IT corporations” (congress, SZ 2)) since Facebook was founded and became part of the stock market. As the material shows, the discussion about data privacy and personal information has shifted from being a footnote in an article to being the main

reason why Facebook is criticised in public. Because the societal opinion has changed regarding that topic, so has the media attention and the corresponding coverage.

Zerfass et al. (2018) further discuss the two dimensions of strategic significance, the objective and the subjective. The subjective aspect would imply that someone at Facebook's higher management is concerned about the conversations and makes it therefore of strategic significance. While it cannot be said for certain that Zuckerberg is concerned with how Facebook and his persona is discussed in German media, it can be argued that he is not indifferent to it because he came to Brussels and answered questions before the EU parliament. The objective dimension, which is only comprehended in retrospect, can be discussed on two levels. On the one hand, back in 2012, data privacy was not as big of a discussion and controversy as during Cambridge Analytica and afterwards, yet experts and some parts of the political field have tried to warn the public about targeted advertisements and privacy breaches. This conversation expanded into something significant, which is why the scandal around Cambridge Analytica became as big and important as it was, and the reporting was rather harsh regarding Facebook and their understanding of data privacy and privacy policies. On the other hand, as big as the media outcry and criticism about data privacy was during the scandal and the congress hearing afterwards, the topic seems to have been normalised. There is no need to spend many articles on how bad Facebook is with the personal data of its users, as this is common knowledge and seems to be considered the accepted reality in society.

Another aspect of strategic communication is replacing mere chance with mistakes, which concretely means "making choices, and choices can be mistakes" (Zerfass et al., 2018, p. 494). In Facebook's case, how Zuckerberg chooses to deal with situations has a great impact on the outcome. When Zuckerberg choose not to directly address the media after the scandal around Cambridge Analytica broke, papers titled that a mistake and continued to pose the question: "New bad news every few days: is the world's largest social network possibly communicating itself to the side-lines with these salami tactics?" (CA, SZ 7); a misguided choice that only encouraged the media to write even more about Facebook and Zuckerberg. Nevertheless, when Zuckerberg chose to speak to the media and appear before congress, he managed to present himself in a light that was far more favourable to him than initially expected by the public:

At one point, Zuckerberg even managed to get a senator to admonish Google to catch up with Facebook when it comes to labelling election ads. The actual interrogated person suddenly appeared as the industry's forerunner in terms of cooperation. (congress, SZ 2)

In this sense, his strategy was based on choices, and what might not have made sense in the beginning, turned out to be the right one. The same can be said regarding the latest data leak in 2021, where Facebook decided not to speak out about the leak in order to try to normalise the situation and situations like this coming in the future. BILD interprets the internal documents stating their long-time strategy is: “Instead of publicly responding to the criticism, Facebook now wants to do nothing and wait until the reporting subsides“ (leak, BILD 3).

After shedding light on the different aspects of strategic communication, the last and most important factor needs to be highlighted, the business model. Those key conversations that have the potential to threaten your key business concepts are the basis of strategic significance and need to be managed accordingly. Discussions, conversations and newspaper articles about Facebook’s business model have exactly that potential, as they are directly targeting Facebook’s key business concept, their data collection, their personalised, targeted advertisements and community. With the negative connotation and underlying critique of the business model increasing between the IPO and the Cambridge Analytica scandal, the heightened critical representation constitutes any conversation of this matter as strategically significant. Journalistic analysis from the SZ like “The fault is in the system, Zuckerberg simply says it's not a fault. It is the system that has made him rich” (CA, SZ 6) or “It's this core of the business model (free service for free user data) that Facebook doesn't want to change” (congress, SZ 3) are not beneficial for the trust in Facebook and their privacy policies.

Nonetheless, one could argue that the seeming acceptance and normalisation of Facebook’s operations and business model in public and, therefore, also in the media are a positive sign for Facebook, as the threat to hurt the company’s reputation is subsiding. However, it could also be argued that because everyone is aware of the data privacy issues and controversies around Facebook’s privacy policies, the normalisation is accepted. Additionally, a corresponding lack of trust in the company and Zuckerberg’s word goes hand-in-hand with the normalisation of data leaks and the media attention.

Overall, multiple aspects, such as the focus on Zuckerberg's person, the increased attention and awareness to data privacy and critical observations of Facebook's business model, constitute the newspaper coverage in Germany as strategically significant and need to be managed from the communication point of view.

7. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the situation concerning the public critique Facebook needs to strategically navigate in German news media. A focus is set on the change and development of those critique points ranging from the IPO on the stock market in 2012 to the latest data leak in 2021. This study problematises that Facebook is one of the biggest and powerful companies worldwide, and their representation in the media and the consequent communication strategy deserve a closer look. Facebook's portrayal in the media, especially in Germany, is interesting to highlight, as news coverage and reporting substantially impact how companies are viewed by the public and serve as a mirror of societal tendencies. Understanding how Facebook is navigating critical press can be viewed as a blueprint for other corporations and organisations in any industry. Taking a closer look at German news coverage can be seen as foreshadowing of how other European countries' portrayal of Facebook could develop.

The critique found in the academic literature in terms of technical, legal, social and emotional stressors based on Facebook have also been touched on in the articles. Legal disputes are represented in the empirical data and discussed. The SZ and Spiegel are further writing about the psychological consequences of Facebook use on young adults and children.

Based on the previous research and theoretical framework, the study poses the main research question, *Which strategic situation concerning public critique does Facebook have to navigate in German news media?* The findings show that Facebook and its founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg seem to have concrete ideas about responding to the media about criticism. Zuckerberg appears calculated about his communication and is reluctant in talking to the media; when doing so, he appears to be mindful about sharing any kind of information with the public and the media. Ever since Cambridge Analytica, they have refrained from responding to data scandals altogether in an effort to normalise the conversation about those and shift them into the new industry standard.

The second question aims at understanding, *Which topics of critique are brought up against Facebook in the German news media? How have they changed over time?* The focal points of critique were Zuckerberg's persona and how he has turned from a gambler that makes reckless business decisions into someone who has no remorse when collecting users' data and using it for his own financial gain. The data also shows an apparent shift in the media coverage from Facebook and mentions of Zuckerberg towards him being the sole centre of the conversation as the personification of Facebook. The second topic is Facebook's business model, which during the IPO was laughed at with no future, but quickly turned into the main criticism. The conversation about the business model peaked during the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the congress hearing with the critical discussion of whether it is ethical to collect users' data in order to provide the best services for businesses to place targeted personalised advertisements. However, this conversation died down during the latest data leak in 2021 and seemed to have become accepted as a new normal and not worth another media outcry. The third point of discussion was Facebook's power and how it only grew with its success and that it is now at a point where there is no sufficient control body, and the question is posed of who writes the rules of the internet. The last issue discussed is Facebook's lack of transparency when providing the public with information, especially in cases of data breaches. This has been a constant for the company and has been met with frustration by journalists, yet again, this seems to have been accepted as how Facebook operates and interacts with the public.

The third research question targets the journalistic and linguist side of the coverage, *Which changes in the journalistic and rhetorical reporting about Facebook can be observed in German newspapers between the IPO and the latest data leak?* The results suggest that the journalistic reporting has developed in a more critical and negative tone towards Facebook.

This study combines the empirical data with the theoretical framework of strategic communication and corporate hypocrisy. By normalising the conversation about Facebook's business model, the company managed to pick up the matter which posed the greatest threat to its core business. As Zerfass et al. (2018) define a matter strategic when it possesses the potential to be detrimental to the core business of an organisation or company if not picked up and managed appropriately. The main point of critique in the media being the business model, that conversation posed a threat to

the company and its core business values, which made it significant for strategic communication.

The findings find indications of the perception of corporate hypocrisy. Especially the three facets by Wagner et al. (2020) are investigated in the study, and the results strongly indicate that the dimensions of behavioural hypocrisy and hypocrisy attributions are presented in the media coverage. In other words, Facebook is perceived to showcase a significant discrepancy between what they say and how they act, which starts with instances of apologising publicly and promising to do better in the future, but in reality, not changing the privacy policies. Hypocrisy attributions aim at the public's perception that the whole company is untrustworthy and hypocritical in its nature. This can be linked, among others, to the subsiding trust in Zuckerberg as the founder and CEO. If the trust in him and his word is gone, the company itself is less likely to be trusted in total.

It could be argued that Zuckerberg might be willing to take the critical press towards Facebook as he is aware that, although of the strong user numbers, the platform is increasingly losing its popularity with the younger generation but can still function as a cash cow for as long as possible. The longer the negative attention is on Facebook, the longer the other companies owned by Facebook, such as Instagram and What's App, are paid less critical attention. As of now, Instagram and What's App are gaining in user numbers and popularity with the younger generations, and public debates about data privacy and targeted advertisements, Facebook's core business, have not been had in such intensity as it has been for Facebook.

Further, it could be assumed that Zuckerberg is content about the normalisation of data leaks and breaches of Facebook within the media as this might have an overshadowing effect on What's App and Instagram. In that instance, when the conversation about data collection and privacy is brought up against those companies, the reporting might not be as negative and critical as it was for Facebook because the matter itself has been somewhat accepted by the public and, therefore, also by the media.

Interesting is the thought that the highly advised transparency in communication for big corporations' contrasts with how Facebook is operating in their strategic communication. As there is no realistic alternative to Facebook as of now, the company does not seem to have to abide by such rules and benefit from the monopolist

position they are in, which includes having a very restricted communication with the public.

Following this argumentation, the communication strategy, portrayed through the media, by Zuckerberg in not interacting with the media about data leaks and breaches as well as being selective about the information shared with the media is successful assuming the goal is to normalise the conversation about targeted, personalised advertisement. With those conversations normalised, they no longer hold great potential to threaten Facebook's core business and now need to be monitored but not necessarily managed from a strategic communication standpoint.

7.1. Contributions and future research

Most of the academic research regarding Facebook targets its consequences on the user, the technical aspects, and the legal aspects. Very little has been researched about how Facebook is represented in the media and their communication strategy. This qualitative study contributes to shedding light on the public portrayal in Germany and how that has changed.

This qualitative study highlights how the significance of strategic communication can be understood in the case of Facebook and the public critique. Gaining knowledge of how strategic communication is understood and applied to the practice is vital for academic research. Moreover, the investigation of corporate hypocrisy of Facebook and the subsequent findings strengthen Wagner et al.'s (2020) argument and serve as a starting point for a deeper analysis of corporate hypocrisy.

By closely examining the journalistic developments and Facebook's strategy portrayed through the media, future research may want to explore how other outlets in Germany report about Facebook and if similar results can be found. Another aspect of research could also be investigating how Facebook is portrayed in other European countries and how that might differ from the German depiction. Further, communication scholars might want to investigate how Facebook communicates on their official platforms, which rhetorical patterns can be found and how that may have changed over the last decade. In this way, the field of strategic communication can take valuable insights for the academic and professional community.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of articles

Flashpoint 1: 19.05.2012 – 19.07.2012 – IPO

Code	Date	Outlet	Title
IPO, SZ 1	21.05.2012	SZ.de	<u>Anleger lassen Facebook fallen</u>
IPO, SZ 2	23.05.12	SZ.de	<u>Facebooks missglückter Börsengang Verzockt in Manhattan</u>
IPO, SZ 3	24.05.12	SZ.de	<u>Zuckerberg, vom Zauberer zum Zocker</u>
IPO, SZ 4	29.05.12	SZ.de	<u>Drei Optionen für Mark Zuckerberg</u>
IPO, SZ 5	18.07.12	SZ.de	<u>Facebook durchsucht Chat-Protokolle</u>
IPO, BILD 1	18.06.12	Bild.de	<u>Gier-Banker verantwortlich für Facebook-Debakel?</u>
IPO, BILD 2	19.07.12	Bild.de	<u>Was ist bloß mit Facebook los?</u>
IPO, BILD 3	22.05.12	Bild.de	<u>War Mark Zuckerberg zu gierig?</u>
IPO, BILD 4	22.05.12	Bild.de	<u>Wird der Börsengang zum Horrortrip? 11 Milliarden Dollar einfach futsch</u>
IPO, BILD 5	24.05.12	Bild.de	<u>Zockte Zuckerberg mit seinen eigenen Aktien?</u>
IPO, BILD 6	05.06.12	Bild.de	<u>Neue Klagewelle gegen Zuckerberg</u>
IPO, heise 1	21.05.12	heise.de	<u>Facebook am zweiten Handelstag: Angst vor dem Absturz</u>
IPO, heise 2	23.05.12	heise.de	<u>Aktien von Facebook stürzen weiter ab</u>
IPO, heise 3	23.05.12	heise.de	<u>Facebooks Börsengang: Anleger zieht vor Gericht</u>
IPO, heise 4	30.05.12	heise.de	<u>In der Facebook-Falle</u>
IPO, heise 5	05.06.12	heise.de	<u>Facebook: Vom Börsenstar zum Sorgenkind</u>

Flashpoint 2: 18.03.2018 – 09.04.2018 – Cambridge Analytica

Code	Date	Outlet	Title
CA, SZ 1	20.03.18	SZ.de	<u>Der blaue Riese wankt</u>
CA, SZ 2	21.03.18	SZ.de	<u>Die Heimlichtuerei muss ein Ende haben</u>
CA, SZ 3	21.03.18	SZ.de	<u>Zuckerberg räumt Fehler ein</u>
CA, SZ 4	22.03.18	SZ.de	<u>Facebook-Chef Zuckerberg "Schwer zu sagen, was wir finden werden"</u>
CA, SZ 5	26.03.18	SZ.de	<u>Datenskandal um Cambridge Analytica Facebook will Betroffene informieren</u>
CA, SZ 6	03.04.18	SZ.de	<u>Mark Zuckerbeg Facebook bin ich</u>
CA, SZ 7	05.04.18	SZ.de	<u>Warum Facebook bei der Aufklärung versagt</u>
CA, BILD 1	20.03.18	Bild.de	<u>Mega Datenskandal! Zerbricht die heile Welt von Facebook?</u>
CA, BILD 2	22.03.18	Bild.de	<u>Mark Zuckerberg entschuldigt sich für Daten-Skandal</u>
CA, BILD 3	22.03.18	Bild.de	<u>Experte: »Facebook wird nie sicher werden! Sein Versprechen zu sicherem Facebook ist „Augenwischerei“</u>
CA, BILD 4	22.03.18	Bild.de	<u>Datenskandal bei Facebook Mark Zuckerberg kämpft um sein Image</u>
CA, BILD 5	23.03.18	Bild.de	<u>Jetzt rollt eine Riesen- Klagewelle auf Facebook zu</u>
CA, BILD 6	04.04.18	Bild.de	<u>Tech-Riesen greifen Mark Zuckerberg an</u>
CA, BILD 7	04.04.18	Bild.de	<u>Persönliche Daten illegal weitergegeben Facebook-Skandal betrifft rund 310 000 Deutsche</u>
CA, CHIP 1	20.03.18	CHIP.de	<u>Nächster Skandal um Facebook: Daten von 50 Millionen Mitgliedern ohne deren Zustimmung gesammelt</u>
CA, CHIP 2	21.03.18	CHIP.de	<u>Luft für Facebook wird enger: Jetzt verklagen die Aktionäre das Netzwerk</u>
CA, CHIP 3	22.03.18	CHIP.de	<u>Ausgerechnet WhatsApp-Gründer Brian Acton rät: Löscht euer Facebook-Konto</u>
CA, CHIP 4	26.03.18	CHIP.de	<u>Auch das noch: Facebook-App überwachte Nutzer jahrelang - und sammelt empfindliche Informationen</u>
CA, CHIP 5	01.04.18	CHIP.de	<u>Netzwerk schließt Nutzer ein: Facebook schafft „Account löschen“-Funktion ab</u>
CA, CHIP 6	03.04.18	CHIP.de	<u>Facebook gegen Apple: So schießt Mark Zuckerberg jetzt gegen Tim Cook</u>

Flashpoint 3: 11.04.2018 – 11.06.2018 – Congress hearing

Code	Date	Outlet	Title
congress, SZ 1	11.04.18	SZ.de	<u>Zuckerberg sollte den Weg für einen Neuanfang frei machen</u>
congress, SZ 2	11.04.18	SZ.de	<u>Da lacht das Silicon Valley</u>
congress, SZ 3	11.04.18	SZ.de	<u>Zuckerberg präsentiert sich als erfahrener Entschuldiger</u>
congress, SZ 4	11.04.18	SZ.de	<u>Zuckerbergs "sorry" ist nur ein Synonym für "Abgehackt"</u>
congress, SZ 5	16.04.18	SZ.de	<u>DerFacebook-Google-Selbstversuch</u>
congress, SZ 6	26.04.18	SZ.de	<u>Regulierung und Milliardenstrafe Wovor sich Facebook fürchten muss</u>
congress, SZ 7	22.05.18	SZ.de	<u>Wie Facebook versucht, die neuen Datenschutzregeln auszuhebeln</u>
congress, SZ 8	23.05.18	SZ.de	<u>Facebook-Chef vorm Europaparlament Demokratie nach Zuckerbergs Geschmack</u>
congress, BILD 1	11.04.18	Bild.de	<u>Zuckerberg-Anhörung vor US-Senat Facebook-Chef ganz cool – Aktie steigt</u>
congress, BILD 2	11.04.18	Bild.de	<u>Zuckerbeg windet sich Das soll er jetzt bei Facebook ändern</u>
congress, BILD 3	11.04.18	Bild.de	<u>Facebook muss reguliert werden</u>
congress, BILD 4	12.04.18	Bild.de	<u>Das verrät Zuckerbergs Spickzettel</u>
congress, BILD 5	22.05.18	Bild.de	<u>Facebook-Chef vorm EU-Parlament Zuckerberg sagt „sorry“ – mehr nicht</u>
congress, CHIP 1	12.04.18	CHIP.de	<u>Nach Facebooks Datenskandal: Das können deutsche Nutzer tun</u>
congress, CHIP 2	13.04.18	heise.de	<u>Entwickler: Facebook kann WhatsApp-Chats einsehen – trotz Ende-zu-Ende-Verschlüsselung</u>
congress, CHIP 3	14.04.18	heise.de	<u>Künstliche Intelligenz: Facebook sagt Nutzerverhalten voraus und verkauft damit Anzeigen</u>
congress, CHIP 4	23.04.18	CHIP.de	<u>Experte sagt voraus: Blockchain-Technik bedeutet Facebooks Untergang</u>
congress, CHIP 5	03.05.18	CHIP.de	<u>Streit mit Facebook eskaliert: Zweiter und letzter WhatsApp-Gründer verlässt Facebook</u>

Flashpoint 4: 03.04.2021 – 03.06.2021 – Data leak

Code	Date	Outlet	Title
leak, SZ 1	03.04.21	SZ.de	<u>Daten von 533 Millionen Facebook-Nutzern geleakt</u>
leak, SZ 2	05.04.11	SZ.de	<u>Datenleck bei Facebook Wachstum zählt mehr als Schutz der Mitglieder</u>
leak, SZ 3	09.05.21	SZ.de	<u>Facebook braucht eine Schrumpfkur</u>
leak, SZ 4	18.05.21	SZ.de	<u>Facebook News Die blaue Zeitung</u>
leak, SZ 5	26.05.21	SZ.de	<u>Facebook droht EU-Wettbewerbsverfahren</u>
leak, BILD 1	04.04.21	Bild.de	<u>Private Daten von mehr als 500 Mio. Usern veröffentlicht</u>
leak, BILD 2	20.04.21	Bild.de	<u>Audio Offensive Facebook bald mit integriertem Spotify-Player</u>
leak, BILD 3	21.04.21	Bild.de	<u>Interne Dokumente Facebook erwartet weitere Datenlecks</u>
leak, Spiegel 4	20.04.21	Spiegel	<u>Facebook startet Clubhouse-Klon</u>
leak, Spiegel 5	11.05.21	Spiegel	<u>US-Staatsanwälte wollen »Instagram für Kinder« verhindern</u>
leak, heise 1	07.04.21	heise	<u>Jüngstes Datenleck: Facebook verwirrt mit Chronologie und Wortklauberei</u>
leak, heise 2	08.04.21	heise	<u>SMS-Spam nach Datenleck: Facebook will Betroffene nicht informieren</u>
leak, heise 3	15.05.21	heise	<u>Facebook: Zusammenschluss mit Giphy liegt auf Eis</u>
leak, heise 4	16.05.21	heise	<u>Ohne Privacy Shield: Es wird eng für Facebooks Datentransfer in die USA</u>
leak, heise 5	28.05.21	heise	<u>Facebook: Job-Anzeigen mit Bias</u>

Appendix B: Translation Book

Zuckerberg discourse

German original	English translation	Code
„waghalsigen Geschäftsentscheidungen“	reckless business decisions	IPO, SZ 4
Drang zum schnellen Geld	urge for quick money	IPO, BILD 3
„Ist er das Computer-Genie das die Welt retten will, oder Frankenstein von Facebook?“	Is he the computer genius who wants to save the world, or Frankenstein from Facebook?	CA, BILD 4
bisschen pummelig	a bit chubby	CA, BILD 4
„Zuckerberg wollte einst die Menschen zusammenbringen auf einer weltweiten, kostenlosen Plattform.“	Zuckerberg once wanted to bring people together on a worldwide, free platform.	CA, SZ 3
Eroberer-Gen	Conqueror gene	congress, SZ 1
bereit sein Grenzen zu überschreiten, Einwände von Tischen zu wischen und Freunde über denselben zu ziehen.“	be willing to cross borders, wipe obstacles off tables and pull friends over the same.	congress, SZ 1
schonungslos abzapfte	tapped ruthlessly	congress, SZ 1
schließlich wurde er durch dessen Missachtung groß	after all, he became great by disregarding it	congress, SZ 1
Seither hat sich im Grunde nichts geändert, sieht man mal davon ab, dass er mittlerweile nicht mehr einzelne Studentinnen schädigt	Basically nothing has changed since then, apart from the fact that he no longer harms individual female students.	congress, SZ 4
Dass aber die Entschuldigung immer nur ein anderer gewähren kann, derjenige, der geschädigt wurde; dass der Sprechakt der Entschuldigung nur wahrhaftig wirkt, wenn derjenige, der sich entschuldigt, tatsächlich etwas wie Schuld empfindet (Hashtag Buße und Reue) – all das würde Zuckerberg wahrscheinlich gar nicht in den Sinn kommen.	But that the apology can only ever be granted by someone else, the one who has been harmed; that the speech act of apology only has a truthful effect if the one apologising actually feels something like guilt (hashtag regret and remorse) - all this would probably not even occur to Zuckerberg.	congress, SZ 4
Widerstandskämpfer	Resistance fighter	CA, SZ 6
bislang nicht bereit ist, auch nur auf einen Teil des wertvollen Datenbergs zu verzichten	so far unwilling to give up even a fraction of the valuable mountain of data	CA, SZ 3
Immer mehr Menschen zu vernetzen, immer weiter wachsen – diese Obsession triumphiert über ethische Bedenken.	Connecting more and more people, growing more and more - this obsession triumphs over ethical concerns.	CA, SZ 6

Business model discourse

German original	English translation	Code
Der Hype um Facebook hat sie verlockt, aber es war eigentlich von vornherein klar, dass die Gewinnaussichten des Sozialen Netzwerkes nicht so vielversprechend sind.	They were tempted by the hype surrounding Facebook, but it was basically clear from the start that the social network's profit prospects were not so promising.	IPO, heise 2
Allheilsbringen wie von vielen ausgegangen	All-round salvation as assumed by many	IPO, heise 2
Daten zu sammeln soweit es geht, bis man an eine Grenze stößt um dann ein wenig zurück zu rudern oder es nur anzutäuschen	until one hits a limit to then backpedal a little or just fake it	CA, BILD 3
Kunde ist nicht nur Käufer sondern auch Lieferant – von Informationen zu seiner Person	The user is not only a consumer, but also a supplier of personal information.	CA, SZ 2
Problem an diesem Skandal ist, dass er nicht auf Datenklau beruht sondern Facebooks ganz normalem Geschäft	The problem with this scandal is that it is not based on data theft but on Facebooks normal business.	CA, SZ 3
die Plattform das Sammeln detaillierter Datenpunkte perfektioniert hat	the platform has perfected the collection of detailed data points	congress, SZ 3
Modell im Sinne seiner Aktionäre immer weiter verfeinert	model more and more refined for the benefit of its shareholders	CA, SZ 6
Vertrauen verspielt	gambling away trust	congress, CHIP 4
schon zu viel Goodwill verspielt	gambled away too much goodwill already	congress, CHIP 4

Facebook in power discourse

German original	English translation	Code
„Facebook ist nicht nur auf dem Weg, sich selbst zu zerlegen, sondern der Social-Media-Riese könnte auch gleich große Teile des restlichen werbefinanzierten Netzes mit in den Abgrund reißen.“	Not only is Facebook on its way to dismantling itself, but the social media giant could take large parts of the rest of the ad-supported web down with it right now.	IPO, heise 4
größte Errungenschaft, seit es das Internet gibt	Greatest achievement since the internet existed	IPO, SZ 1
Sie haben einen Hoffnungswert geplündert. Das ist bitter für das System Börse, für den Standort USA und für die Netz-Gemeinde	They have robbed a hopeful stock. This is bitter for the stock exchange system, for the USA as a business location and for the Internet community.	IPO, SZ 3
Symbol für den großen Ausbruch aus der Krise	Symbol of the great breakout from the crisis	IPO, SZ 3
In vielen Teilen der Welt ist Facebook gleichbedeutend mit dem Internet	In many parts of the world, Facebook is synonymous with the internet	CA, SZ 1
eines der mächtigsten Konzerne des Internets	one of the most powerful corporations on the internet	CA, SZ 3
Nutzer und ihre Daten sind Macht und Macht ist Geld	Users and their data are power and power is money	CA, SZ 3
Rolle des Staatenbauers	role of the state builder	CA, SZ 6
Der König unterstützt seine Untertanen vor den kapitalistischen Raubtieren – eine verquere Sicht auf ein börsennotiertes Unternehmen	The king supports his subjects from the capitalist predators - a skewed view of a publicly traded company	CA, SZ 6
Mit der Macht als wichtigste globale Kommunikationsplattform geht auch Verantwortung einher.	With power as the most important global communication platform comes responsibility.	CA, SZ 6
Facebook ist zu mächtig	Facebook is too powerful	leak, SZ 3
vier gewaltige Kommunikationsplattformen kontrolliert	controlling four massive communication platforms	leak, SZ 3
Wer schreibt die Regeln im Internet	Who writes the rules on the internet	leak, SZ 3
Mark Zuckerberg ist kein demokratisch legitimierter Regierungschef	Mark Zuckerberg is not a democratically legitimised head of government	leak, SZ 3
So hält der Konzern die unangenehmen Seiten des Internets am Laufen	the company keeps the unpleasant sides of the internet going	leak, SZ 2

Lack of transparency discourse

German original	English translation	Code
auch in diesem Fall informierte das Unternehmen öffentlich zögerlich	in this case, too, the company was publicly hesitant to inform	CA, SZ 1
versagen täglich, Kunden ernsthaft darüber aufzuklären	fail daily to seriously inform customers about it	CA, SZ 2
Immerhin sollen diejenigen Nutzer informiert werden, die vom CA-Datenskandal betroffen sind	At least those users who are affected by the Cambridge Analytica data scandal should be informed.	CA, SZ 5
Anstatt bei der Aufklärung der Umstände des jüngsten Datenlecks, von dem mehr als 500 Millionen Nutzer betroffen sind, mitzuhelfen, stiftet Facebook nur mehr Verwirrung	Instead of helping to clarify the circumstances of the latest data leak, which affected more than 500 million users, Facebook is only causing more confusion.	leak, heise 1
Weiter schweigen und die Situation aussitzen	Continue to remain silent and just wait out the situation	leak, BILD 3
Facebook erwartet weitere Datenlecks – und will dazu schweigen	Facebook expects more data leaks - and wants to keep quiet about it	leak, BILD 3
Das Versprechen, dass Zuckerberg bei der Übernahme vor sieben Jahren gab, hat er längst gebrochen	Zuckerberg has long ago broken the promise he made when he took over the company seven years ago.	leak, SZ 3
unklar, wie lang Facebook die Vorgaben noch respektiert	It is unclear how long Facebook will continue to respect the guidelines.	leak, SZ 3

Journalistic developments

German original	English translation	Code
Herkulesaufgabe	Herculean task	IPO, heise 4
in den Sand gesetzt	messed up	IPO, BILD 3
vom spektakulären Börsengang zum spektakulären Absturz	from spectacular IPO to spectacular crash	IPO, SZ 2
Zuckerberg gab sich aber mit deren Zusicherung zufrieden zufrieden und hat es nicht nochmal geprüft.	Zuckerberg, however, was satisfied with their assurances and did not double-check.	CA, BILD 7
musste gar nicht tricksen	did not even have to trick at all	CA, SZ 3
Die Naivität ist im Rückblick erschreckend.	The naivety is frightening in retrospect.	CA, SZ 6
verglichen mit dem aktuellen Gegenwind war es damals ein Spaziergang	Compared to the current headwinds, it was a walk in the park back then.	CA, SZ 5
Luft für FB wird enger	The air is getting tighter for Facebook	CA, heise 2
schlechte Nachrichten für FB wollen kein Ende nehmen	There is no end to the bad news for Facebook	CA, heise 2
Zerbricht die heile Welt	Is the perfect world coming apart?	CA, BILD 1
Datensaugerei	Data suction	CA, BILD 2
jetzt ist der Sturm da	now the storm is brewing	CA, SZ 6
spirale schlechter Nachrichten	spiral of bad news	CA, SZ 7
Facebook hat Mühe, das Feuer auszutreten	Facebook is struggling to put out the fire	CA, SZ 7
Der Fall ist nur der jüngste in einer Reihe von Skandalen, die Facebooks öffentliches Ansehen schwer beschädigt haben.	The case is just the latest in a string of scandals that have severely damaged Facebook's public image badly.	CA, SZ 1
leider nicht geschafft	unfortunately didn't manage	congress, CHIP 2
Zuckerberg antwortet – nur eben unzureichend	Zuckerberg answers - but simply inadequately	congress, BILD 5
leichtes Spiel	easy game	congress, BILD 5
leicht ausweichen	easy to dodge	congress, BILD 5
Trotzdem sagte Zuckerberg eingangs wieder „sorry“	Nevertheless, Zuckerberg said "sorry" again at the beginning	congress, BILD 5
billiger Punktsieg	cheap victory	congress, SZ 1
Kann denn nicht endlich mal jemand Facebook zerschlagen oder besser noch Entzweiknirschen?	Can't someone finally smash Facebook or, better still, divest it?	congress, SZ 4
debattieren Bürger endlich über die Regulierung von IT-Konzernen	Citizens finally debate the regulation of IT corporations	congress, SZ 2

German original	English translation	Code
Geheimdienstjargon	intelligence slang	congress, CHIP 3
Überwachung und Aufklärung	surveillance and reconnaissance	congress, CHIP 3
zahlreiche ethische Fragen aufwerfe	raises numerous ethical questions	congress, CHIP 3
Dominanz ist schon fast unheimlich	Dominance is almost frightening	congress, CHIP 4
Wie kann man als Nutzer seine Zustimmung geben, wenn nicht mal Zuckerberg Bescheid weiß?	How can users give their consent when not even Zuckerberg seems to know?	congress, SZ 6
jüngstes Datenleck	latest data leak	leak, heise, 1
Nicht der erste Skandal um Nutzerdaten, für den FB in der Kritik steht	This is not the first scandal involving user data for which Facebook has been criticised.	leak, BILD 1
Erneut	once again	Leak, SZ
bei Facebook bislang auf Granit beißt	has so far been met with great resistance on Facebook	leak, heise 5
Facebook verspricht zwar Besserung, ändert aber letztendlich nicht wirklich etwas	Facebook promises improvement, but ultimately does not really change anything	leak, heise 5
Facebook hat schon in der Vergangenheit darin versagt, dass Wohlergehen von Kindern auf seinen Plattformen zu gewährleisten.	Facebook has already failed in the past to ensure the welfare of children on its platforms.	leak, Spiegel 5
Facebook hat schon in der Vergangenheit darin versagt, dass Wohlergehen von Kindern auf seinen Plattformen zu gewährleisten.	Facebook has already failed in the past to ensure the welfare of children on its platforms.	leak, Spiegel 5
Heißt im Klartext: Facebook schiebt die Schuld von sich weg und will, dass die Nutzer akzeptieren, dass ihre Daten nicht sicher sind.“	In simple terms: Facebook shifts the blame away from itself and wants users to accept that their data is not safe.	leak, BILD 3

Linguistic observations – Negative connotations

German original	English translation	Code
verpatzt	botched	
Ausbeutung	Exploitation	IPO, heise 2
schlampig und miseabel	sloppy and miserable	IPO, heise 3
verheerend	devastating	IPO, BILD 6
Ramschpapier	junk paper	IPO, BILD 2
Börsendesaster	stock market dodger	IPO, BILD 6
schließt Nutzer ein	locks users ein	CA, CHIP 5
Datenwust	data jumble	CA, SZ 2
vermeintlich harmlose Apps	supposedly harmless	CA, SZ 2
torpedieren	torpedo	congress, SZ 2
sexistische Hot-or-Not-Seite	sexist Hot-or-Not-page	congress, SZ 4

Linguistic observations – Mockery

German original	English translation	Code
auf den Kopf stellen und mit den Füßen wackeln	Standing on your head and wiggle your feet	IPO, heise 4
Von Face"boom" zu Face"blubb"	From Face"bom" to Face"blubb"	BILD, IPO 6
Facebook kann jetzt nicht mehr hoffen, dass schon bald eine neue Sau durchs Dorf getrieben wird.	Facebook can't hope anymore that the next one is being dragged through the mud now.	CA, SZ 7
Alles heißt dann aber auch wirklich alles, denn – wo wüsste man es besser als bei der Kommunikations-Plattform FB – in der vernetzten Welt bleibt wenig geheim	Everything means everything, because - where would one know better than at the communication platform Facebook - in the networked world, little remains secret	CA, SZ 7
ließ sich auch noch offline ganz einfach in die Karten gucken	even offline, he showed his hand.	congress, BILD 4
Seine eigenen Daten schützt er auch nicht so besonders	He is not very protective of his own data either	congress, BILD 4
kleinen Skandälchen	little scandals	congress, SZ 1
Ja, so fühlt sich das also an, Mister Zuckerberg!	Yes, so that's how it feels, Mister Zuckerberg!	leak, SZ 2

Navigating critique

German original	English translation	Code
Vertraut mir einfach trotzdem.	Just trust me anyways.	CA, SZ 6
Zuckerberg scheint sich der eigenen Macht nicht bewusst geworden zu sein, genauso wenig die Verantwortung mit der Macht	Zuckerberg seems to have become unaware of his own power, as well as the responsibility that comes with power.	CA, SZ 3
Zuckerberg sagt alle paar Monate sorry, verbunden mit dem Versprechen, ab jetzt alles super zu machen	Zuckerberg says sorry every few months, combined with the promise to make everything excellent from now on.	congress, SZ 4
blieb als letztes Bild eines im Gedächtnis, das der Milliardär selbst in die Runde geworfen hatte: Das vom College-Studenten, der in seinem Wohnheim eine tolle Geschäftsidee hat.	The last image that remained in memory was one that the billionaire himself had thrown into the round: the one of the college student who has a great business idea in his dorm.	congress, SZ 8
Doch ähnlich wie die Cambridge-Analytica-Affäre oder andere Datenlecks und Skandale wird Facebook auch diesen kurzen Sturm der medialen und sozialmedialen Empörung aussitzen.	But like the Cambridge Analytica affair or other data leaks and scandals, Facebook will sit out this brief storm of media and social media outrage.	leak, SZ 3

Strategic communication context

German original	English translation	Code
debattieren Bürger endlich über die Regulierung von IT-Konzernen	Citizens finally debate the regulation of IT corporations	congress, SZ 2
Einmal gelang es Zuckerberg gar, dass eine Senatorin Google ermahnte, bei der Kennzeichnung von Wahlwerbung mit Facebook gleichzuziehen. Der eigentlich Verhörte erschien plötzlich als Vorreiter der Branche in Sachen Kooperation.	At one point, Zuckerberg even managed to get a senator to admonish Google to catch up with Facebook when it comes to labelling election ads. The actual interrogated person suddenly appeared as the industry's forerunner in terms of cooperation.	congress, SZ 2
Alle paar Tage eien neue Hiobsbotschaft: Kommuniziert sich das größte soziale Netzwerk der Welt mit dieser Salami-Taktik womöglich selbst ins Abseits	New bad news every few days: is the world's largest social network possibly communicating itself to the sidelines with these salami tactics?	CA, SZ 7
Anstatt öffentlich auf die Kritik einzugehen, will Facebook nun allerdings gar nichts mehr tun und abwarten, bis die Berichterstattung nachlässt	Instead of publicly responding to the criticism, Facebook now wants to do nothing and wait until the reporting subsides.	leak, BILD 3
Der Fehler liegt im System, Zuckerberg sagt einfach, dass es kein Fehler ist. Es ist das System, das ihn reich gemacht hat	The fault is in the system, Zuckerberg simply says it's not a fault. It is the system that has made him rich	CA, SZ 6
Genau diesen Kern des Geschäftsmodells (kostenloser Dienst für kostenlose Nutzerdaten) möchte FB nicht ändern	It's this core of the business model (free service for free user data) that Facebook doesn't want to change."	congress, SZ 3