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MASTER THESIS

M.A. International Relations: Global Political Economy

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**Universiteit
Leiden**
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Leiden University
Faculty of Humanities

Master Thesis in partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for The Degree of Master of Arts In
International Relations: Global Political Economy

**Revisiting the Protest Paradigm:
Climate Activists between Attention and Marginalisation**
**A Qualitative Content Analysis of German Newspaper Coverage of the Climate Justice
Movement**

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29.05.2021
Word count: 14994

Abstract

There is a lack of research on the relationship between climate movements and the media to better understand why movements are taken seriously or remain unheard. This thesis thus examines the coverage of the three climate justice organisations (CJO) *Fridays for Future*, *Extinction Rebellion* and *Ende Gelaende* within the German newspapers *Sueddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)* and *Die Tageszeitung (taz)* during three different time periods between 2018 and 2021. A sample of 122 articles is explored via a qualitative content analysis to identify the frames used by the journalists and to assess if the newspapers cover the CJOs substantively or if they rather adhere to the so called 'protest paradigm'. In line with previous research, the results show that lot of the articles gave protestors a voice and portrayed their cause as legitimate. Nevertheless, 57% are mostly or entirely focussed on information as the protest numbers or the legality of actions compared to only 16,4% with substantive coverage, meaning that the issues and/or demands of a CJO are discussed. Arguably, this circumstance hampers the CJOs' ability to transmit their messages what in turn undermines their credibility and the function of protest actions as necessary drivers for progressive change.

Keywords:

Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, Ende Gelaende, Protest Paradigm, Substantive Coverage, Propaganda Model, Climate Justice

Acknowledgements:

Unfortunately, within the last years, no progress has been made in the Mac OS X version of *Microsoft Word* and several bugs have thus not been fixed. I therefore apologise for possible formatting flaws which I was not able to solve and kindly ask the university to accept additional file-formats for students' assignments in the future since otherwise, this may produce unequal conditions due to the different computer-devices the students can use.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CJ	=	Climate Justice
CJO	=	Climate Justice Organisation
CJM	=	Climate Justice Movement
COP	=	Conference of the Parties
EG	=	Ende Gelaende
EJ	=	Environmental Justice
EJO	=	Environmental Justice Organisation
EJM	=	Environmental Justice Movement
FFF	=	Fridays for Future
IPCC	=	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
SMO	=	Social Movement Organisation
SM	=	Social Movement
SZ	=	Sueddeutsche Zeitung
taz	=	tageszeitung
UN	=	United Nations
XR	=	Extinction Rebellion

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1. INTRODUCTION

The last two years were marked by numerous uprisings against the world nations' inaction to tackle the climate crisis. Millions of people protested in more than 100 countries to stand up against the international as well as intergenerational climate-injustices, mainly produced by the Global North through industrial development. Despite these vast mobilisations and the prioritisation of climate protection in various political agendas, the national policies are still insufficient to reach the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement (Roelfsema et al., 2020). The climate justice movement is thus not taken seriously. While the scholarly literature highlights the importance of the media for social movements to transmit their messages and raise awareness about their cause (Birkland, 2007; Cox, 2018), many authors claim that the media does not report on such voices adequately and ignores their demands and issues (Boyle et al., 2012; Weaver & Scacco, 2013; Ossewaarde & Bergmann, 2020).

This research explores these claims with regard to the climate justice movement to find out if the press might be a delegitimising factor for the CJM what might help to understand why their demands are not taken seriously by governments and a wider public. Not knowing more about which role the media plays in these relationships would risk us to oversee certain dynamics which hamper the process of positive and necessary social change. This paper draws on the theory of the *protest paradigm* whose supporters argue that the news media focusses on protest information as the number of participants or the legality of an action while their actual issues and demands are ignored (ibid). Therefore, the thesis addresses the following research question: ***in what ways does the press treat climate justice organisations (CJOs) substantively?***

To answer that question, a qualitative content analysis is conducted to examine the coverage of three CJOs, during three different time periods, by two German newspapers. This is done through detailed qualitative hand coding of 122 articles to explore the frames used by the journalists and to evaluate if respective CJO is covered substantively or not. A quantitative analysis of the frames and evaluated articles helps to test the hypotheses and answer the research question. To classify if an article is substantive or not, I draw on the concept of *substantive coverage* by Amenta et al. (2019) whereas all articles fall under this definition which either clearly discuss the issue or the demands of a social movement organisation (SMO) or both.

The paper is structured as follows. The following chapter provides some context in which this work is embedded. The third chapter constitutes the literature review which focusses on three possible determinants for substantive coverage and leads to the specification of the research

question and the hypotheses in the chapter afterwards. Chapter five outlines the methodology and the analytic approach, namely the used content analysis, how the sample is drawn and how the variables are measured. The sixth chapter explains the process of coding and organising the frames. Afterwards, these frames are presented as qualitative results followed by the quantitative findings. In the eighth chapter, the results are put in the context of the research question and hypothesis before the paper closes with some concluding remarks.

2. CONTEXT

In this chapter, some concept definitions and theoretical considerations are outlined in order to equip the reader with the necessary background information to critically assess the literature and empirical considerations of this paper. The concept of climate justice is explained and the related movement discussed. The paper then draws on the role of social movements on the one hand, and of that of the media on the other, before the literature on their interdependent relationship is discussed in the next chapter.

2.1. Environmental and climate justice

The term 'climate justice' (CJ) dates back to the 1990s when the environmental justice movement, under the unmissable evidence of threatening climatic changes, pushed the topic on the global political agenda (Jafry et al., 2019). While 'environmental justice' has its roots in earlier environmental concerns including the rights of nature but also the unequal exposure of industrial pollution as for instance through atomic energy or the over-exploitation of resources (see M. Taylor, 2018), 'climate justice' extended these critiques to the topic of climate change and its unequal shared responsibilities and burdens which are distributed along geographical and socio-economic lines (Tokar, 2019). The Global North which "benefited the most from the last 250 years of economic development" (Climate Justice Now, 2008 in Tokar, 2019, 17), is simultaneously responsible for most of the global green house gas (GHG) pollution. Proponents of climate justice argue that due to this historical legacy, the industrialised nations have to decarbonise their economies and must pay for climate mitigation and adaptation in the Global South. This is also because the latter will be affected the most by climate change effects, is the least financially and technically equipped to take counter-measures and is less responsible for global pollutions (see Frey et al., 2019).

While there is wide agreement on those inequalities and injustices, questions on how the responsibility is shared among states remains a contentious issue. And further questions on which measures have to be taken to transition to a sustainable economy remains highly disputed between political and economic elites, scientists and activists (see Murphy, 2019 or Tokar, 2019). The climate justice *movement* however, which is highly influenced by emancipatory issues of the left, uses the term to combine struggles of injustices as climate justice, sexism, racism or labour exploitation by emphasising that they share the same root causes of capitalist development and thus demands fundamental systemic changes (see Kössler 2014 or Jafry, 2019).

And it is these injustices which brings the people to the streets to protest for their rights to better living conditions in the present and the future and to demand global politics to rectify the systemic failures which reproduce those patterns of inequalities and injustices (see i.e. Frey et al., 2019).

2.1.1. Historical roots of the Climate Justice Movement

The movement dates back to the 1960s when the first environmental activists for instance of *greenpeace* became concerned with the climate change issue while the *Limits to Growth* report of the *Club of Rome* of 1972 marked a crucial point for a new public and scientific awareness and activist mobilisation (Trauner, 2018). The movement saw a mobilisation boost during the end of the 2000s first, through the alarming IPCC report of 2007 (Tokar, 2019; Kössler, 2019), which summarises the climate science's state of the art and which predicted irreversible damages to the earth's environment and species in a way that it constitutes a fundamental threat to human civilisation (Eckersley, 2013; Tokar, 2019). Second, the movement further expanded when the world community revealed its inability to agree on effective climate policies at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen in 2009.

At that time, the movement counted already numerous organisations and networks around the world, including for instance *Climate Justice Action* (Sander, 2016), *Climate Action Network International*, *Friends of the Earth International*, *Climate Action Now!* or *La Via Campesina* (see Garrelts & Dietz, 2014b). The activist groups focussed on international climate or G8 summits, organised climate camps as spaces for utopian ideas, networking and protest or conducted actions of civil disobedience to block the sources of climatic issues, as for instance the fossil fuel industry (ibid.). Another crucial moment in the history of climate politics and

thus for the CJM was the COP21 in 2015 where the UN Paris Agreement was signed. Herewith, the UN changed its top-down approach and

“has moved from a formal intergovernmental legally binding agreement (Kyoto Protocol) with prescribed targets for emissions reductions, rights and responsibilities [...] to what has been called a “bottom-up” innovative approach based on a system where all states (Parties) will voluntarily develop and oversee their individual nationally determined contributions (NDCs) (Murphy, 2019).

The international community still fell short to formulate clearly binding commitments with mechanisms of sanctioning for states which fail to meet the convention what in turn questions the agreement's effectiveness to achieve justice (Murphy, 2019). Such concerns had not been solved at the climate conference in Katowice in 2018 despite another even more alarming IPCC report which was published a few weeks earlier (Allen et al., 2018). This simultaneous state of emergency and political paralysis provoked a new round of protests and fell together with the establishment of international movement organisations as *Fridays for Future* and *Extinction Rebellion* in 2018 while bringing hundreds of thousands of people to the streets to protest (Fridays for Future, 2021) and thousands to block major crossroads in cities around the world (Taylor M., 2020; DW, 2019).

2.1.2. Climate Justice Organisations in Germany and beyond

A *climate* movement was formed in the late 2000s on the basis of a strong environmental and specifically anti-nuclear movement. Leftist activists who protested against the G8-summit in Heiligendamm in 2007 explored the climate topic as an issue of (i.e. racial) injustices and added it to their agenda (Sander, 2016). Inspired by climate camps in the UK from 2006, activists organised a similar 'climate and anti-racism' camp in Hamburg to mobilise around 1500 people to block the coal site in Moorburg (Schraven & Wetzel, 2007; Sander, 2016). Since then, the movement expanded with the resistance against coal energy and the herewith connected displacement of villages at the mines while today, it includes these issues within the overarching principle of climate justice (Kössler, 2014; Sander, 2016). Kössler (2014) and Sander (2016) argue, that the 'left scene' thus essentially contributed to the evolvement of the CJM by using the term '*climate justice*' to include social and thus systemic questions to build a clear opposition against mere reformist solutions for the climate question within capitalist development.

In the tradition of blockages of nuclear waste transportation of the anti-nuclear movement, occupations of coal production sites increased – for instance in the Hambach Forest, which became a symbol of the climate struggle in Germany and beyond (see Connor, 2018; Kaiser, 2020). From there, the alliance *Ende Gelaende (EG)* was formed by different environmental activist groups to focus on the occupation of coal excavators and transportation sites (Ende Gelaende, n.d.a). Since 2015 the CJO carried out such actions about twice a year with around 4000 participants from more than 20 countries (Ende Gelaende, 2019). *EG* supports a social-ecological transformation towards an energy system based on renewables and democratic organisation and includes fundamental changes of our patterns of consumption and private property (Ende Gelaende, n.d.b).

Fridays for Future (FFF) emerged in the Winter of 2018/19 in Germany, about four months after Greta Thunberg school-struck on a Friday for more political climate action in front of the Swedish parliament for the first time. In September 2019 at the last 'global climate strike' before the corona pandemic, the CJO mobilised millions of people to protest in more than 3800 cities around the world and about 1.4 million in Germany alone (ZDF, 2019; Fridays for Future, 2021). Today the CJO mobilised various demographic groups beyond children and the youth and contains sub-groups as *Parents for Future* or *Scientists for Future* while being supported by more than 26800 scientists in Austria, Germany and Switzerland (Scientists for Future Deutschland, n.d.). The CJO refers especially to the adherence to the 1.5°C goal of the Paris agreement and the fulfilment of Germany's responsibility towards the environment and future generations.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) became known in autumn 2018 with a demonstration in front of the UK government, blockages of bridges across the Thames river and activists reading a letter about the climate crisis to the queen while being superglued to the gates of Buckingham Palace (XR, n.d.a). The organisation established its own structures in Germany in 2019 with the first mass actions during the so called 'global rebel week' in October when various major crossroads in Berlin were blocked by hundreds of activists (DW, 2019). Today *XR* counts 1169 local sub-groups 76 countries (XR, n.d.b) and in more than 120 cities in Germany alone (XR Kiel, n.d.). The CJO highlights the task to achieve the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement and demands that governments must take immediate action to achieve that goal, that it must inform the public adequately and that climate-citizen assemblies must be installed (XR, n.d.a). Similar to *EG*, *XR* builds on peaceful resistance principles of Mahatma Gandhi and uses non-violent direct actions and civil disobedience to raise awareness and pressure governments to take climate action (ibid.).

In all these organisations, the different national and sub-national groups follow some basic principles while acting in an independent and cooperative manner with structures following direct-democratic principles. For instance, while XR follows the same three main demands everywhere, their actions and structure are organised by the respective communal sub-group and may differ in other claims and demands.

2.2. The Role of Social Movements

In his book “*Why social movements matter. An Introduction*” Laurence Cox (2018) describes social movements as the collective action taken by people which are concerned about the same societal problem for which none of the conventional channels of political influence (i.e. elections) is considered or experienced to be effective. He assumes that movement action emerges through situations where we are not able to meet our basic needs as for instance by fighting for civil rights for people of colour or the creation of new institutions for i.e. radical educational programs. Further he argues that our societies are constructed under the principle of ‘equality of opportunity’ which creates a state of competition where only some people will meet some of their needs while others do not (Santos, 2019). And since we are thus constantly trying to fulfil the needs we cannot meet, movements exist everywhere around us and constitute a normal part of our societal life. In other words, *we need social movements* in order to adjust for lacks of human needs which the conventional structures and institutions fail to fulfil.

From an agenda-setting perspective on social injustices, Vergara-Camus argues that movements take actions “to directly confront their oppressors, push their agenda into the public debate, or negotiate with the state” (2016, p. 251) while demanding the security of basic rights – often for marginalised groups. Further, agenda-setting theory suggests that groups of people or movements respectively are able to influence public policy processes (Birkland, 2007) – i.e. by persuading political officials through protesting (see Wouters & Walgrave, 2017). Movements are thus one among various actors competing about which issues enter the political agenda (Birkland, 2007).

Within the last 100 years, in many cases of civil campaigns, citizens brought about regime changes (i.e. in former colonial countries) – most successfully via non-violent actions (see Stephan and Chenoweth, 2011). Further, social justice movements often succeeded in achieving more just conditions i.e. in the case of rights for women or people of colour or better labour conditions and wages (see Langmann & Benski, 2019) but also in achieving complete autonomy

and self-determination from a centralised nation-state power as in the case of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico or the Kurds in Rojava, Syria (see Kothari et al., 2019).

The success of movements to push progressive policies or to achieve social change in general depends on i.e. the group's ability to construct a problem crucially enough to be treated by political officials or to mobilise a broad mass of citizens, other movement actors or political officials (i.e. opposition parties) for their cause (Birkland, 2007). Furthermore, such mechanisms are also altered by “windows of opportunity”, i.e. through events as natural disasters or electoral change (ibid., p. 68 f.). Finally, Birkland argues that “groups often seek media coverage as a way of expanding the scope of conflict (ibid., p. 70). Social movement researchers agree that the media is actually a crucial, if not necessary actor for movements to communicate their cause and amplify public and political awareness about the issue at hand (Vergara-Camus, 2016; Gaby & Caren, 2016; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019; Peoples, 2019, p. 25).

All that is to say, social movements can be a significant actor within the agenda-setting process for public policies for social change on the one hand and can be able to create that change by themselves through grassroots activities on the other. Simultaneously, movements are crucially dependent on the media to communicate and amplify their cause to alter the agenda-setting process but also to mobilise people for their actions to activate change from the bottom-up. Besides, movements are crucial to open people's minds for other realities than the dominant discourses and to fight or alter the hegemonic ideology – or in the words of degrowth scholars: ‘to decolonise the imaginary’ (Feola, 2019).

2.3. The Problem with the Media

The media plays an ambiguous role for social movements. Social movements need the media to transmit their messages to the public and political officials. Without the media and its focus on spectacle and entertaining news formats (Nieland, 2008; Curran, 2019, p. 63 ff.) movements could probably not raise the awareness they need to mobilise a critical mass and in turn, to pressure governments strongly enough to get a hearing in political decision-making processes. But as communication research of the following paragraphs suggests, the media is not an unbiased, fully neutral actor.

On the one hand, it serves as a filter to make information about the real world available to all citizens. On the other hand, it holds political actors and institutions accountable by providing and critically assessing the information and therefore constitutes a ‘fourth estate’ within systems of democratic checks and balances. Meanwhile, the objectivity norm suggests

that the press follows a way of reporting which reflects reality in the most neutral and representative way, meaning without opinion- or preference-biases (see Curran, 2019; Ott & Mack, 2020; p. 66; O’Keeffe, 2012, p. 461 ff.; Krüger, 2020). Said differently, objectivity means “the reporting of facts in an impartial manner.” (Ott & Mack, 2020, p. 576).

However, newspapers are never entirely neutral. There are factors which influence their reporting as the paper's ideological stance, the journalist's personal experience, advertising or a (region-specific) critical political culture (Strömberg, 2004; Boykoff & Roberts, 2007; Klaehn & Mullen, 2010; Benson & Hallin, 2007; Benson, 2010; Stecula & Merkley, 2019). Moreover, their role itself is not always an independent and static one. The need of the media to attract a wide audience on the one hand and the need of politics to attract media attention on the other, lead to what scholars call ‘infotainment’ or ‘entertaining politics’ respectively (Nieland, 2008; Curran, 2019, p. 63 ff.).

Critical scholars further assume that instead of representing all possible perspectives on ‘reality’ and thus ‘the truth’, media tends to merely reflect the elites’ discourse without questioning *their* common sense, meaning that criticisms in the media do not go beyond those occurring between the elites or within the party-political spectrum (Hallin; 1986; Bennet, 1990; Curran, 2019). Herman & Chomsky (1988) argued that the media institutions thus help to ‘manufacture societal consent’ for the dominant ideology and serve as a propaganda machine for political and economic elites.

So what is the relationship between the media and social movements? As discussed above, movements constitute an important actor within society. But how does news media report on movement actors when they challenge the status quo and question the elites' discourse? Does the media indeed work as a propaganda machine for the elites and thus discredit activists who criticise their ideology? And what determines such reporting? These questions are the subject of the following literature review with a focus on the press.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Three different but overlapping bodies on how to approach these questions can be identified in the literature, each with certain limitations. In one or the other way, they are all discussing to what extent social movements are covered *substantively* in the press. But the scholars chose differing perspectives on those relationships and the determinants of substantive coverage. It is

noteworthy that the literature on *environmental* movements is relatively scarce and thus constitutes only a small proportion in this review.

The literature reviewed in the first part introduces the so called 'protest paradigm' and explains how the news institution's ideology affect how a movement is treated. The second body contains the influence of the movement organisations' strategies and the third part outlines the reasons for possible changes over time.

3.1. News institutions – Ideology and the Protest Paradigm

Media theory claims that news institutions tend to merely reflect the discourse of the elites and thus the party-political spectrum while alternative voices and perspectives are hardly represented and consequently muted within the mainstream public discourses. With regard to social movements and their actions, news institutions thus tend to follow what scholars call the 'protest paradigm' which was tested by numerous studies (Boyle et al., 2012; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019; Mourão, 2019; Muncie, 2020; Jacobssen, 2020). It describes the phenomenon when the media withdraws the protestors' voice and credibility (Edgerly et al., 2011; Mauri-Rios, 2020; see also Andersen, 2017) by focussing on the movement actions (i.e. the legality or the number of protestors) instead of the demands and issues which they are protesting for on the one hand, and by not letting movement actors speak for themselves but merely reporting about them on the other. For instance, this also holds for the coverage of the relatively young climate justice organisation (CJO) *Fridays for future* where protestors have been largely delegitimised by being portrayed as 'immature children' who simply want to skip classes while most of their claims remained uncovered (Ossewaarde & Bergmann, 2020; Jacobssen, 2020; von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020).

However, the literature suggests that such delegitimation does not necessarily always occur whereas scholars draw different conclusions from this. M. J. Taylor (2017) summarises the literature on the protest paradigm by stating that "positive coverage has only been found to occur if a movement does not challenge the status quo" (p. 43). Being more differentiated, Mourão's (2019) study of anti-governmental protests in Brazil suggest that such phenomena do not necessarily evolve from a general suspicion by the press towards the movement but rather have to do with the political context whereas she found that when elected officials from the opposition supported the protests, this served as a legitimisation and elicited protest support by the press. Another empirical comparison of protest coverage in Brazil, India and China showed

that the substance of coverage varies, depending on the extent to which the news institution shares the same ideological leaning with the government in power (Shahin et al., 2016).

Further, the literature *does* provide evidence for correlations between negative news reporting and ideological disparity between movements and news institutions (M. J. Taylor, 2017; Weaver & Scacco, 2013; Kim & Shahin, 2020). This circumstance lead M. J. Taylor (2017) to develop the model of the '*partisan* protest paradigm'. It basically includes the hypothesis of political parallelism (see Benson, 2010, p. 7) to explain how newspapers treat movements according to their ideological affiliation (see Mueller, 1997; Corrigan-Brown, 2016; Amenta et al., 2019; von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020), meaning that social movement organisations tend to be supported by those news outlets which share the same ideological stance.

While the few existing articles on the coverage of the leftist climate justice movement show a general adherence to the protest paradigm, it turns out to be stronger among the rightist, and weaker and more differentiated among the leftist press (Ossewaarde & Bergmann, 2020; von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020). And in a recent study on anti-government protests in South Korea, Kim & Shahin (2020) found that this parallelism even exists among national press reporting on foreign protests. Most of this scholarship examined leftist social movements but the unique analysis of Weaver and Scacco (2013) showed that such marginalisation equally exists among rightist movements in left-news institutions' coverage.

While the protest paradigm enjoys popularity among social movement scholarship and helps us to understand why social movements' issues are often not substantively covered, the respective literature has certain limitations. On the one hand, the application on environmental movement organisations (EJO), including CJOs, is scarce, which is critical with regard to the severe climate crisis and the necessity to gain further knowledge on possibilities to induce change. On the other hand, existing literature rarely *combines* the protest paradigm with other possible intervening factors as i.e. the article type, the news institution's audience or ideology.

In the analysis, I will therefore try to compare the reporting of two different newspapers, one green-left wing paper and a centre-left leaning one with liberal-market values to examine if the outlet's ideology affects the substance of coverage.

3.2. Social Movement Organisation – Strategies, Issues, Demands

Another body of scholarly work discusses the characteristics and strategies of the SMOs which are assumed to affect news coverage depending on the SMO's demands, claims and strategies.

Media theory suggests that the news organisations' political economy requires an increasing audience for whose attraction the media focusses on events and entertainment (MacLeod., 2019), also termed 'politainment' (Nieland, 2008).

In line with this thesis, some scholars argue that violent actions increase coverage (Mueller, 1997; Myers & Caniglia, 2004; Shahin et al., 2016; Mourão, 2019) while having negative effects on *how* the movement is treated by the news (Evans, 2016). Other evidence suggests the opposite, meaning that violence has a decreasing effect on coverage in general (Hoffbauer, 2011) and on substantive coverage specifically (Amenta et al., 2019). Moreover, even acts of civil disobedience which are non-violent can be used by the press to discredit SMO actions by framing them as 'violent' and dangerous acts (Hayes, 2007).

Interestingly, the relation of civil disobedience and press coverage – or at least research on the influence of civil disobedience versus other tactics – constitute a blind spot in the communication literature despite the historical importance of such strategies ranging from Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King (B. P. Taylor, 2015) to the anti-nuclear movement and to the more recent counter-globalisation movement (Sommier et al., 2019). Only a few studies examined disruptive (here 'non-violent-') actions and found that road and rail blockades as 'non-casual' actions increased front page coverage but did not lead to more quality of that coverage (Wilkes et al., 2010). And findings of Taylor (2017) suggest that civil disobedience can lead to media attention but that this coverage does not hold on for long. Besides, Wilkes et al. (2010) argue that the size and length of activist events do not significantly influence press coverage whereas Wouters (2013) found the opposite for the influence of a protest's size on television coverage while the frequency of protests had no effect.

Further, the SMO's way of framing an issue plays a decisive role. Regarding *general* coverage, positive-emotional framing by movements, which is necessary to mobilise people, has a negative effect on the extent of coverage (Luxon, 2019) equally to positive evaluations of governmental work (Corrigal-Brown, 2016) and radical or controversial frames (Amenta et al., 2019) whereas the latter additionally lead to negative *treatment* by the news media (see Bergmann & Ossewaarde, 2020; von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020; Muncie, 2020). Besides, Edgerly et al. (2011) found that while ambiguous terms which provoke polarisation raise media attention, such polysemy of frames can equally be detrimental for movements when journalists use them to delegitimise the movement. And when the frames are not focussed but target various policy areas, the press find it equally difficult to highlight the movement's actual demands (ibid.).

Basically, the literature thus suggests a 'trilemma' situation in which movements' communication is either too generous to the government and thus receives no coverage; too radical to receive substantive coverage; or too blurred to transmit their messages and demands with clarification to receive recognition (see also Sobieraj, 2010).

Unsurprisingly but noteworthy, another determinant of substantive press coverage is the political ideology of the social movement organisation, including its claims and demands. The theory of political parallelism (Benson, 2010, p. 5 ff., 17; Shahin et al., 2017, p. 158) argues that news institutions evaluate movements according to their ideological ties (M. J. Taylor, 2016). Vice versa, this means that the political standing of the SMO determines the quality of coverage. Moreover, since media theory claims that news reporting primarily reflects the elites' discourse (Bennet, 1990), radical stances which deviate significantly from the mainstream (press) discourse – as for instance the claim that a sustainability transition requires a shrinking economy and climate citizen assemblies – can be expected to be marginalised through delegitimisation (see Pedro, 2011 and Gaby & Caren, 2016). Besides, a radical *reputation* may lead to the coverage the movements want, meaning that even if it is perceived as negative within the press, it can be positive for the movement (Evans, 2016).

While all this well explains the emergence of the protest paradigm and supports the earlier mentioned propaganda theses, it equally lacks examinations of environmental and climate movements and direct comparisons of SMOs which differ in their tactics and strategies. Especially examinations of civil disobedience are almost non-existent. To take the above findings and lacks in the literature into account, I will thus compare the coverage of three climate justice organisations with different tactics and demands, including acts of civil disobedience, to see if these affect the news' treatment of the respective organisation.

3.3. Changes over time

Other factors which determine substantive coverage are certain changes over time. Seguin (2016) for instance, studying the US civil rights organisation *Black Panthers*, found that news coverage tends to follow a 'positive feedback' loop or a "rich-get-richer-process" meaning that "past media attention increases the likelihood of future media attention" (p. 997). This is in line with the above mentioned aspects of the media's political economy insofar as news outlets need 'credible sources' in order to attract readership (Andersen, 2017, p. 165 ff.) whereas movements

which are already present in the discursive arena may gain more credibility than those which are not (see Seguin, 2016).

In addition, Seguin (2016) draws on Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) theory of political path dependence to explain his findings that high credibility of an established movement organisation, gained through *activities in the past*, can lead to media attention even if the movement is not involved in the event which elicited media *coverage in the present*.

As already mentioned in the previous section, different policy issues may gain different media attention – and if an issue is publicly seen as significant can equally change over time. In his famous work *The “Uncensored War” - The Media and Vietnam*, Daniel C. Hallin (1986) developed the 'spheres concept' arguing that policy issues are treated differently by the media, depending on the latter's perception of how the public evaluates an issue or how it is interested in it. In his case, Hallin argued that the anti-Vietnam-War protests moved from “the “sphere of deviance” through the “sphere of legitimate controversy” to the “sphere of consensus”” (M. J. Taylor, 2016).

Furthermore, movements often succeed in entering certain discursive arenas through their controversial actions while not being able to control the discourses afterwards (Hopke, 2012; Luthfa, 2019; von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020). This can be explained by the 'politainment' thesis (Nieland, 2008) and the media's focus on “drama and spectacle” (M. J. Taylor, 2017, p. 55), meaning that news institutions report on specific events which promise high readership attraction but follow their own interpretation of an issue when the events are over (see also Barkan, 1979; Sobieraj, 2010). This phenomenon was also termed “discursive eruption” by Gaby and Caren (2016, p. 413). They found that the radical Occupy Wall Street movement succeeded in bringing the topic of inequality on the political agenda, but after some time, the media's attention for the movement decreased while the topic of inequality remained popular with think tanks receiving more attention and replacing the movement as a credible source (ibid.). The topic thus became politicised as the media discussed it within a left-right context and further gained attention among political elites (Gaby & Caren, 2016) which both speaks for Hallin's 'sphere of consensus' with regard to the issue's importance.

These findings might explain the apparent focus of the media on one specific SMO even when various SMOs, treating the same topic, exist. Nevertheless, this body of literature is small and thus needs further research to confirm those theses by i.e. comparing different movements with

similar goals but with a different time of existence. This holds especially for environmental movements. I try to build on this gap by examining the coverage of CJOs during three different time periods to see if the overall growth and influence of the climate movement increased their stance as 'credible source' for news institutions and thus the substance of their coverage.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

The thesis tries to fill the above discussed gaps by examining in what ways the substance of press coverage on the climate justice movement (CJM) differed according to the ideological overlaps between the news institution and the climate justice organisation (CJO), if it differed dependent on the CJO's demands and strategies and how the reporting changed with the CJOs' evolution between 2018 and 2020. It will therefore treat the following general research question: *in what ways does the press treat climate justice organisations substantively?* And more specifically: *Does the news institution's ideology, the CJO's strategy and the time of existence of the CJO affect its treatment by the press?* The thesis thus focusses on how the CJOs *Fridays for Future*, *Extinction Rebellion* and *Ende Gelaende* are framed by the German press. It examines if the treatment is substantive or rather adheres to the protest paradigm, how the respective framing varies per news outlet and the CJO's strategy and how the frames changed over time.

Based on the findings of the respective body of the scholarly literature, this thesis will test four hypotheses. The first constitutes the guiding hypothesis which is based on media theory and its assumption about the protest paradigm in general as well as on the movement literature which provides empirical evidence that the press tends to delegitimize social movements. The other three hypotheses derive from the respective section in the literature review. The *substance of coverage (y)* thus constitutes the dependent variable. The *news institution's political standing (x1)*, the *strategy of the climate justice organisation (x2)* as well as the factor *time (x3)* are the independent variables.

H1: Building on the vast literature assuming that news media focusses on general protest information instead of the SMOs' issues, demands or accusations (i.e. Boyle et al., 2012; Amenta et al., 2019), this thesis assumes that: *the majority of newspaper articles does not cover the CJOs substantively but rather adheres to the protest paradigm.*

H2: In line with the thesis of 'political parallelism' (Kim & Shahin, 2020) and M. J. Taylor's (2017) 'partisan protest paradigm', meaning that news institutions tend to discredit SMOs if they do not share the same ideology, this thesis suggests that: *The CJO receives substantive coverage if its ideology is in line with the news institution's political standing.*

H3: Based on findings supposing that the more radical a SMO's tactics and demands are, the less it receives substantive coverage (Amenta et al., 2019), this thesis assumes that: *Fridays for Future receives more and rather substantive coverage than Extinction Rebellion or Ende Gelaende.*

H4: Building on Seguin's (2016) assumption of 'positive feedback loops', meaning that a SMO receives more substantive coverage with the time of its existence, this thesis suggests that: *The substance of coverage increases over time and with the establishment of the respective CJO in the political discourse.*

5. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTIC APPROACH

To test the hypotheses and to answer the research question, the articles of two different German newspapers are analysed on their substantive coverage of three climate justice organisations (CJO), namely *Fridays for Future (FFF)*, *Extinction Rebellion (XR)* and *Ende Gelaende (EG)* and during three different time periods. This is done in order to find out if 1) one can generally claim that CJOs are covered substantively by the mainstream press, 2) if the news institution's political standing and 3) the CJO's strategy influence whether a CJO is covered substantively and 4) if the possibility of substantive coverage increases over time with the establishment of the CJO. The following section thus explains the used method, how the analysis account for the variables in the hypotheses, meaning how they are measured, and how the sample was drawn.

5.1. Method

The examination of an article's framing is conducted via a mix of a *conventional content analysis* and a *directed content analysis* in order to evaluate if an article's coverage of a CJO is substantive or not. In a *conventional content analysis*, the frames used by journalists are identified during the analysis of the newspaper articles (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In a *directed* one "the researcher uses existing theory or prior research to develop the initial coding scheme prior to beginning to analyze the data" (ibid, p. 1286).

The reason why the *conventional content analysis* was chosen is its openness to all possible categories of frames used by a journalist instead of drawing on already examined frames as in a pure *directed content analysis* which could lead to constraints and exclusions of other possible frames or categories (see Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The reason for additionally choosing the *directed* approach is that I draw on von Zabern & Tulloch's (2020) main categories of CJO frames in the press, i.e. 'how the protestors are represented' and 'how their demands and accusations are represented', since these constitutes useful categories for my analysis of substantive coverage. The third possible variant, the *summative content analysis* which searches for keywords and combinations of words to interpret the meaning of a text (ibid.), would not allow to capture frames which have not yet been categorised by other scholars and is thus not included. Therefore, the coding and building of categories is mainly embedded in the process of the analysis.

The strength of the *conventional content analysis* is thus that it is not biased via other researchers but that the categories and frames are grounded in the actual articles. Disadvantages arise with regard to the personal bias which may similarly lead to a distorted representation of the data. That is to say, while this method suffers under the risk of losing objectivity, reliability is partly guaranteed through a relatively large sample of $n=122$. To account for validity, I compare the newspaper frames with the actual issues and demands of the CJOs, meaning that the method is in line with the research's goal of examining if a newspaper article covers the movements substantively.

5.2. Variables and Measurement

In this section, I will shortly review how each variable is grounded in the literature and how they are accounted for in the analysis.

5.2.1. The Dependent Variable

The first hypothesis is tested via the analysis of substantive coverage in every article which reveals if the majority provides such coverage or not. The corresponding dependent variable *substantive coverage* (y) accounts for the media theory of media propaganda and findings of social movement research which suggest that news media tend to reflect the elites discourse of the party political spectrum (MacLeod, 2019) and thus delegitimises radical actors and opinions which challenge the status quo (Gitlin, 1980) while converging radical demands with the currently dominant attitudes about the issue at hand (see Pedro, 2011).

To measure the dependent variable, meaning to evaluate if an article's coverage is substantive or not, I draw on Amenta et al.'s criteria for substantive coverage, namely "whether the article published movement actors' demands or frames and whether the coverage was mainly issue-oriented" (2019, p. 20). I decided to differentiate between "substantive", "partly substantive" and "non-substantive" coverage, based on the degree if the demands remained vague or absent or were mentioned thoroughly and if an article treated the issue of climate change substantively with a clear reference to one or more of the CJOs. Thus, I examine the articles' frames and evaluate if these correspond with the CJO's issues, demands and accusations which are presented in the following.

All three CJOs resemble each other regarding the issue of climate change, the demand for meeting the goal of 1.5°C of the Paris agreement as well as the claim that this requires radical change from the status quo. Obviously, their demands and claims refer to German politics whereas *FFF* and *XR* as internationally represented CJOs highly resemble to their respective groups in other countries.

The main demands of *Fridays for Future Germany* are first and for all the warranty of a world worth living in for future generations. Further, an immediate end of subsidies for coal energy, an immediate closure of one quarter of coal energy plants and a price of about 180€ per ton of emitted CO₂. The midterm demands are an exit from coal energy until 2030, net zero emissions until 2035 and a fully renewable energy provision until 2035 (Fridays for Future, 2019). The main accusations of *FFF* are that the most recent policy initiative of the German government, the so called 'climate package' of autumn 2019, is not sufficient to reach the 1.5°C goal, that the ecological damages of the current climate policy path will be irreparable and that an effective climate policy requires transparency and integration of adolescents into policy processes. The CJO's demands are radical in their rejection of the status quo while allowing for market-based mechanisms to i.e. reduce emissions what gives them a centre-green-left political standing. Their main actions of street protests constitute a rather moderate form of protesting compared to the other two CJOs.

The main demands of *Extinction Rebellion* are first, that the government must "tell the truth" about the severeness of the ecological crises and must declare a climate emergency. Second, that the government must "act now" to achieve net zero emissions until 2035, to stop the species' extinction and to end ecological over-exploitation. And third, that the government must install citizens' assemblies for establishing effective measures to end the climate crisis and for achieving climate justice. Further claims include that this implies significant systemic

changes, that science predicts an eco-systemic collapse and mass extinction by non-compliance with the 1.5°C goal, that governments disregard these facts and the right of citizens to be adequately informed about the crises and that the solutions to tackle those problems have already been available for decades (see Extinction Rebellion Deutschland, n.d.). Similarly to *FFF*, the CJO's main demands are radical in their innovative scope and resemble a green-leftist position. Their actions however mainly include civil disobedience and are thus rather radical.

The CJO *Ende Gelaende* acts more issue oriented than the other two CJOs with a focus on coal energy. Their main demand is an immediate exit from coal energy production and the claim that this requires substantive systemic changes towards a social-ecological transformation (Ende Gelaende, n.d.a). While no declarative statement about the demands and claims exist, the CJO's press releases entail several declarations of consent with position papers of other movement actors. One of those papers is the "immediate action program for climate justice" (*Sofortprogramm Klimagerechtigkeit*) which includes for instance the claims that the 1.5°C goal requires a shift away from a growth-based and free-market economy (see Ende Gelaende, n.d.b). The demands are: meeting the 1.5°C goal of the Paris agreement and radical systemic changes towards a regionalised and democratised organisation of supply chains; a reduction in overall energy consumption which must be accompanied by a 100% renewable energy production; a 100% ecological agriculture characterised by food sovereignty principles; a shift away from individual to public transportation; the socialisation of housing space; and divestment in the fossil fuel sector and democratised investments in renewables. Those demands are clearly radical and can be placed on the far-left-green side of the political spectrum. Similarly to *XR*, their actions of civil disobedience are more radical than those of *FFF*.

5.2.2. *The Independent Variables*

News institutions' ideology

The first independent variable, *news institution's ideology* (x_1), is based on findings which suggest that news institutions treat movements positively, when they share a similar ideological leaning and rather negative when they do not (Weaver & Scacco, 2013; M. J. Taylor, 2017; Mourão, 2019; von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020). To measure this variable, the analysis compares two different newspapers, namely the online articles of the German centre-left newspaper *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (*SZ*) and the online articles of the green-left news-cooperative *Die Tageszeitung* (*taz*).

The reason for choosing German newspapers is that the CJM is relatively big in Germany (Fridays For Future, 2021) but also because the available Lexis-Nexis account does only include relatively small English-speaking newspapers.

There are several reasons why I picked those two outlets. Both newspapers have a large readership, namely the *SZ* with 1.27 million for the print version and around 1.5 million additional monthly readers for the online version (DocPlayer, 2015) and the *taz* with 320000 for the print version and 2 million for the online version (*taz*, 2021).

With the *Tageszeitung* I include a green-leftist paper from which I thus expect to be rather in favour with the climate justice movement. Herewith, I also try to re-examine the findings of Ossewaarde & Bergmann (2020) which claim that the *taz* showed anti-climate protest tendencies. With the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* I want to contribute to the literature by adding the biggest German daily newspaper to the analysis. Further, its centre-left and market-liberal standing constitutes a case worth testing, because these ideological leanings assume a divided position of the *SZ* since the environmental justice movement holds leftist-liberal but equally anti-capitalist or anti-market-liberal values respectively. In addition, the existing literature lets one expect that other more right-wing papers, as for instance the centre-right wing *FAZ* or *Welt*, adhere to the protest paradigm anyway (Ossewaarde & Bergmann, 2020; von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020) and are thus less worth testing. Consequently, this allows to observe a difference in coverage between the two news institutions with different ideologies and to test the 'partisan protest paradigm' of the second hypothesis.

Strategies of the CJO

The second independent variable, *strategies of the CJO* (x_2), accounts for social movement research which suggests that the more radical the demands and actions of a movement are, the less likely it is to receive substantive coverage (Wilkes et al., 2010; Evans, 2016; Jacobsen, 2020) or any coverage at all (Hoffbauer, 2011; Amenta et al., 2019; Luxon, 2019).

To measure this variable, the analysis examines articles which mention one or more of the three different CJOs whereas all three differ in their strategies. *Fridays For Future* rather focusses on actions as protests and school strikes and on more moderate demands corresponding with those of the scientific climate discourse (see Fridays for Future, 2019). *Extinction Rebellion* and *Ende Gelaende* include various actions of civil disobedience whereas the former's actions rather focus on raising awareness within public places and the latter's on targeting the coal industry directly; their demands are more radical and more substantial than those of *Fridays for Future* (see XR Deutschland, n.d.; Ende Gelaende, n.d.a). The comparison

of these three CJOs and their representation within news media allows to account for different demands and actions and thus for the second hypothesis.

Changes over time

Further, the third independent variable *changes over time (x3)* is based on research which claims that media coverage of a movement in the past, increases the likelihood of coverage in the future (Seguin, 2016) whereas the substance of that coverage may decrease (Gaby & Caren, 2016). To test the corresponding third hypothesis and to examine if the respective movement gained credibility over time, the analysis first provides a statistical overview on the general coverage of the three movement organisations throughout the years 2018-2020. Further for the actual analysis, the articles were chosen from three time periods, depending on the CJO and the newspaper attention (see table 1). It is therefore possible to see if the framing and substance of the CJOs’ representation in the press in- or decreased or remained similar over time.

The reason why I draw on samples from 2019 onwards for *FFF* and *XR* is that in 2018, during the establishment of the CJOs, there was hardly any reporting on the movement organisations – except for *EG*. The choice of four weeks in some cases and one week in others is due to respective intensity of reporting and a limited total number of articles which could be analysed in this paper (see table 1). For instance, in the case of *FFF – Period 1*, there was a

CJO	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
FFF	01.01.2019	15.07.2019	15.01.2020
	-	-	-
XR	01.04.2019	07.10.2019	01.01.2020
	31.04.2019	14.10.2019	19.04.2021
EG	01.09.2018	15.06.2019	01.01.2020
	31.10.2018	31.07.2019	28.02.2020

Table 1. Time periods of the sample

decent number of articles to examine while in *FFF – Period 2* and *FFF – Period 3*, there were too many articles in the whole month of July 2019 and January 2020, so I reduced those to two weeks. Similarly, I reduced the period *XR – Period 2* to the so called ‘rebel week’, a protest week with numerous actions and a high news media attention. All periods are orientated towards such events or actions with high media attention.

5.3. Sampling

To explore the articles, the online databank Lexis Nexis was used for the newspaper *taz* and the company-based databank *SZ Archiv* for the newspaper *SZ* whereas I focussed on the online and print version of the daily papers and excluded additional products as magazines. The articles were identified through the keywords “Fridays for future”, “Extinction Rebellion” and “Ende Gelaende”. All articles with no clear reference to the respective CJO as well as those with less

Newspaper	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
- CJO			
SZ – FFF	7	8	9
SZ – XR	1	9	1
SZ – EG	4	3	1
taz – FFF	1	4	15
taz – XR	6	13	8
taz – EG	11	13	8

Table 2. Sample per time period

than 400 words length were excluded since I expect them to be too short to entail substantive coverage. This resulted in a total population of n=122 articles – across both newspapers, all three CJOs and the three time periods (see table 2 and 4).

The reason why opinion or short articles are not excluded as in other studies (see for instance Amenta et al., 2019 or von Zabern &

Tulloch, 2020) is because I want to examine the overall picture of the climate justice movement coverage in the press. That is to say that also journalistic opinion articles (or maybe especially those) or interviews are part of how the movement is covered by the press and tells something about how the press or the respective news outlet treats the movement’s issues and demands.

6. ANALYSIS AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS

After the sample was drawn, the articles were organised in the text editing program MAXQDA according to the newspaper, the different climate justice organisations (CJOs) and the time periods. In line with the conventional content analysis method (see section 6.1.), the articles were analysed individually and through detailed hand coding to identify reappearing as well as overarching frames which are applicable to different CJOs (see table 3). The frames could be of one sentence or several paragraphs, depending on if the meaning or essence of a frame changed or not. Once the meaning in the text changed, the next frame was coded according to the frame table below. There was thus no word or line limitation to mark a specific frame. Every coded frame was simultaneously coded with the respective generic code since otherwise, the statistic of the latter would not have been available. That means that all generic codes account for about 50% while all the specific codes account for the other 50%. Text sections could have

been coded several times if their meaning consisted of several frames. This resulted in the following codebook.

Frames Identified via Qualitative Content Analysis				
#	Code/Frame	Explanation	Frequency	%
1	Voice	Direct or indirect citation of an actor	331	8,99
1.1	Activists	Includes members of an CJO but also participants of an action	204	5,54
1.2	Parents	Includes parents (only applied for FFF-articles)	1	0,03
1.3	Teachers	Includes teachers (only applied for FFF-articles)	6	0,16
1.4	Politicians	Includes politicians and 'speakers' of political/public authorities	44	1,20
1.5	Entrepreneurs	Includes entrepreneurs, 'speakers' of companies or company interest groups	13	0,35
1.6	Experts/Scientists	Includes scientists, members or speakers of think tanks or other experts	21	0,57
1.7	NGOs	Includes all kinds of NGOs (Greenpeace was counted as an NGO)	18	0,49
1.8	Other	Includes i.e. policemen, speakers of labour unions or citizens	30	0,81
SUM (specific codes)			337	9,15
TOTAL			668	18,14
2	Protestors	Refers to the presentation of the CJO/protestors	273	7,50
2.1	Legitimate/Politicised youth	Positive framing of a politicised youth (only for FFF-articles)	31	0,84
2.2	Legitimate/Necessity of protest	Positive framing; issues legitimise CJO action	115	3,12
2.3	Delegitimize/Truants/C children	Negative framing of an immature youth (only for FFF-articles)	8	0,22
2.4	Delegitimize/Incredible radicals/extremists	Negative framing of CJO actors as radicals/extremists	36	0,98
2.5	Constructive critique	Frames opposing to CJO position; constructive critique	20	0,54
2.6	Neutral	Neutral framing of CJO actors	70	1,90
2.7	False assumptions	Frames opposing to CJO position; claims/accusations are not true	5	0,14
SUM (specific codes)			285	7,74
TOTAL			558	15,24
3	Demands/claims	Applies when a frame includes CJO's demands or accusations	342	9,24
3.1	XR 3 demands	Includes one or more of the 3 central XR demands	21	0,57
3.2	CC threat/urgency	Frames climate change as urgent and CJO action as necessary	54	1,47
3.3	Vague	Frame describes a demands/accusation very vague (i.e. "The CJO is protesting for more climate protection")	56	1,52
3.4	Intergenerational Justice	Frame highlights intergenerational justice	7	0,19
3.5	Global Justice	Frame highlights global justice	16	0,43
3.6	System Change	Frame describes demands/claims for systemic changes	16	0,43
3.7	Coal-Phase-Out	Frame refers to the demand for a phase-out of coal energy	35	0,95
3.8	Paris Agreement/1,5°C	Frame refers to demand of the adherence to the 1,5°C goal	14	0,38
3.9	Net Zero Emissions	Frame refers to demand to achieve net zero emissions until 2025 or 2035 respectively	14	0,38
3.10	Non-action-accusation	Includes all accusations of governmental failure/non-action to act adequately on the climate crisis	73	1,98

3.11	Other demands/claims/accusations	Includes all other demands/claims/accusations (i.e. communal political issues; demands to reduce car traffic etc.)	62	1,68
SUM (specific codes)			368	11,96
TOTAL			710	21,2
4	Issue: ClimateChange	Refers to frames which thematise climate change	61	1,66
4.1	Neutral position	Neutral framing of climate change	5	0,14
4.2	CC: Urgency: No	Frames climate change as a non-urgent issue	0	0,00
4.3	CC: Urgency: Yes	Frames climate change as an urgent issue	26	0,71
4.4	Solutions: political/statist	Assumes solutions to be of political nature and through state involvement	19	0,52
4.5	Solutions: reformist	Assumes solutions of individual behavioural changes and market-based mechanisms	3	0,08
4.6	Solutions: radical	Assumes solutions through radical, systemic changes	8	0,22
4.7	Responsibility: Every country	Assumes that every country is equally responsible for its own emissions/pollution	0	0,00
4.8	Responsibility: North/historical	Assumes that the industrialised countries share a higher burden of historical emissions/pollution	1	0,03
SUM (specific codes)			62	1,7
TOTAL			123	3,36
5	Off-topic/other content	Refers to all frames which do not treat the CJO's issues, demands or accusations	747	20,29
5.1	Critique - non-constructive	Frames opposing to CJO position; claims/accusations are not constructive/of populist nature	8	0,22
5.2	Background information	Describe background information of an CJO action or political disputes	167	4,54
5.3	Individual behaviour	Describes individual sustainability behaviour	14	0,38
5.4	Protest information	Information on the number of protestors, action processes, disputes with the police etc.	291	7,91
5.5	Activist information	Information on individual CJO actors (i.e. age, background etc.)	39	1,06
5.6	CJO information	Information on the tactics, logistics and values of an CJO	102	2,77
5.7	Legality	Describes legal issues of CJO actions (i.e. school strikes, coal-transportation blockages or police actions)	73	1,98
5.8	Other	Includes all other information	74	2,01
SUM (specific codes)			768	20,87
TOTAL			1515	41,16
TOTAL SUM (specific codes)			1820	51,42
TOTAL (valid)			3575	97,12
Missing			106	2,88
TOTAL			3681	100,00

Table 3. Frames in newspaper articles

With regard to the frame frequencies of *table 3*, it is conspicuous that off-topic frames hold the highest share of all generic frames (20,29%) and describe protest information as i.e. on the number of protestors, the legality of certain actions as for instance school strikes or information on how a CJO is organised. There were hardly any articles which discussed the CJOs' demands

and claims in a thoroughly manner while making references to the threat of climate change, i.e. by highlighting their demands to meet the 1,5°C goal of the Paris agreement while mentioning the IPCC's warnings for failures (9,24%). This was even the case with editorials or reportages which have the space to include all kinds of background information. And even articles which showed a sympathy for the actions and were written in a legitimising way for the protestors cause did principally focus on the action itself.

In order to evaluate if an article is substantive or not, I focussed on the frames under 3. *Demands/claims* and 4. *Issue: Climate Change* to test if the article fulfilled the criteria for substantive coverage, namely if it either mentioned or discussed one or more central demands of a CJO or/and if it discussed the issue of climate change thoroughly while referring directly to the respective CJO. Besides the option to mark an article as “substantive” or “non-substantive” I included the option “partly substantive” to create more leeway for the evaluation and more specific results. These findings are the subject of the next chapter.

7. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

In the first part of this chapter, the descriptive statistics of how the articles are distributed across the different variables are described. The second part explains the results, while it first refers to the distribution of the different frames which have been explored during the analysis. Afterwards, these frames are put in the context of the research question and hypotheses, namely how the substantive coverage is distributed across the independent variables.

7.1. Descriptive Statistics

The *figures 1* and *2* show the distribution within each newspaper of all articles which mention the respective CJO (incl. those with less than 400 words) within a specific month, starting with September 2018 and ending with April 2021. That means “month 10” corresponds to June 2019, “month 20” to April 2020 and “month 30” to February 2021. Here, it can be clearly observed that *FFF* gained the highest prominence in both newspapers, that *XR* and *EG* received more coverage in the *taz* in proportion to *FFF* and that the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in Germany in March 2019 correlates with a media attention breakdown for the *CJM* (month 19 onwards).

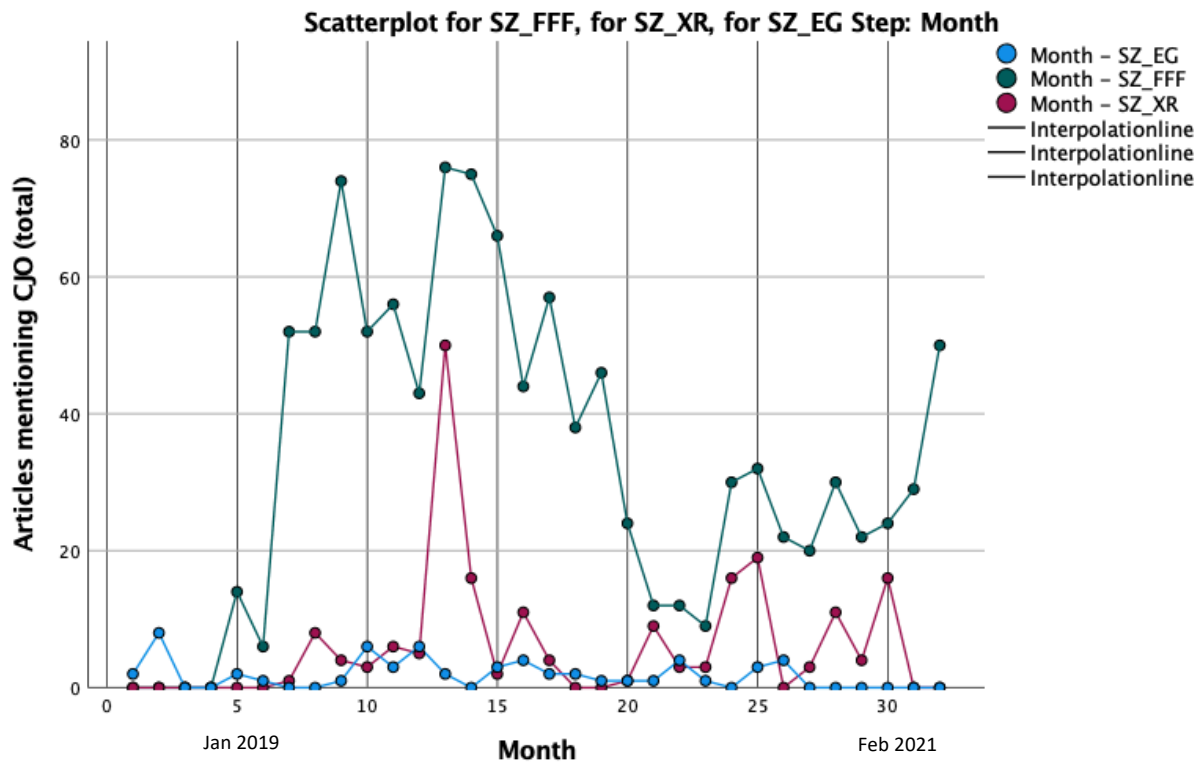


Figure 1. SZ-articles mentioning CJOs

Further, the media attention cycles correspond with the specific CJO actions, for instance with the *FFF Global Climate Strikes* in September 2019 (month 13) and 2020 (month 24), the *XR Rebel Week* in October 2019 (week 14), or the *EG* coal mine occupations in June (month 10) or November 2019 (month 15) and in September 2020 (month 25). While both newspapers share a quite similar attention to *FFF*, the *SZ* showed higher coverage of *XR* from 2020 onwards but in general less coverage of *EG* than in the *taz* across the whole time period.

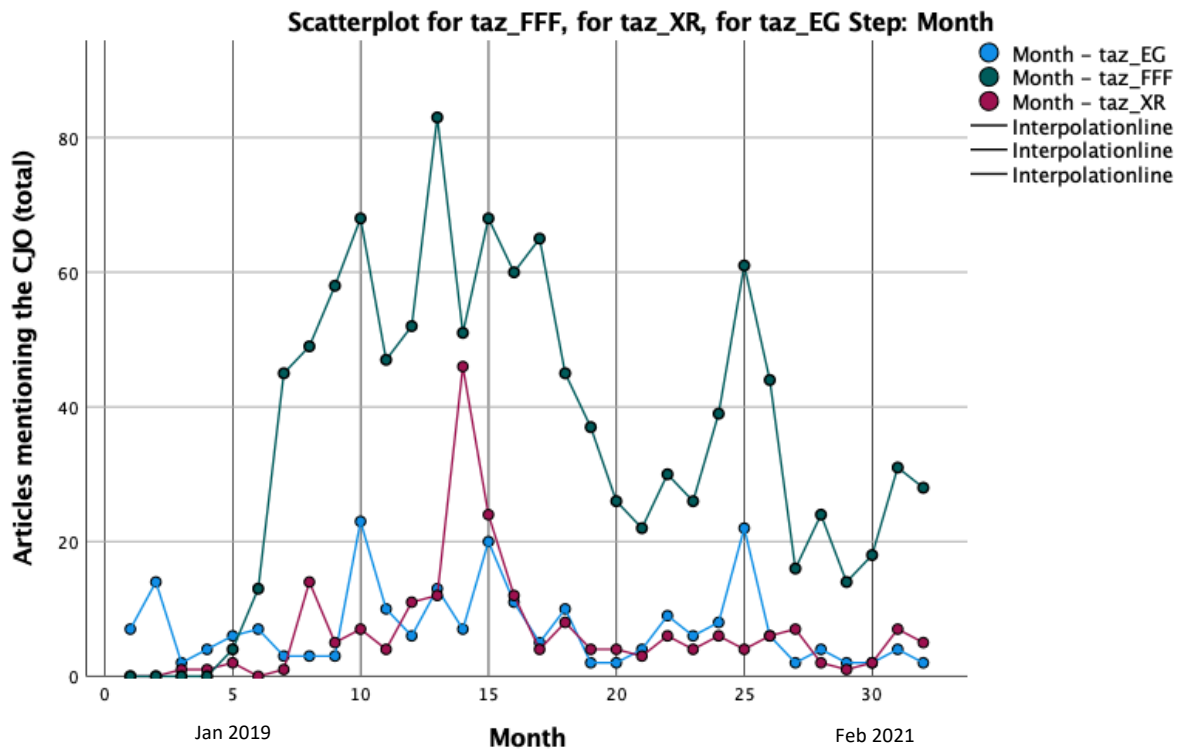


Figure 2. taz-articles mentioning CJOs

7.2. Sample distribution across x-variables

Table 4 shows how the analysed articles were distributed across the different x-variables, namely the two newspapers *SZ* and *taz*, the three CJOs *FFF*, *XR* and *EG*, as well as the three time periods.

Newspaper	Frequency (%)	CJO	Frequency (%)	Period	Frequency (%)
SZ	43 (35,2)	FFF	42 (34,4)	Period1	31 (25,4)
Taz	76 (62,3)	XR	39 (32)	Period2	50 (41)
		EG	38 (31,1)	Period3	38 (31,1)
Total	119 (97,5)				
Missing	3 (2,5)				

Table 4. Sample distribution per x-variable

7.3. Frame distribution

Table 3 shows the frequencies of the codes whereas the generic codes are marked by bolt letters and cells and the codes which are necessary to identify an article as substantive are marked with a blue background. The results show a clear distribution towards off-topic-frames with a share

of 41,16% of all frames compared to demands and claims with 21,20% whereas the share of 3,04% of the frame “Vague” must be subtracted what leads to 18,16% for CJO's demands, claims and accusations since frames coded as “vague” constitute non substantial frames as for instance that “the CJO demands better climate action”. Of 1820 frames, only 133 frames refer to one of the general demands or accusations of the CJOs, 62 more refer to action-specific demands or accusations and 54 frames highlight the threat of climate change and/or the urgency to take climate action. Taken these together makes a proportion of 149 out of 1820 frames (12,21%) which discuss the cause of a CJO. In addition, it is notable that a lot of the articles gave protestors a chance to speak with a count of 204 frames compared to 44 of politicians or 30 for others (mainly policemen and -women). Furthermore, 146 frames on the how the protestors were portrayed are legitimising, followed by 70 neutral and 44 delegitimising frames.

7.4. Frame distribution across the x-variables

Table 5 shows the distribution of those frames which are of main interest for this analysis, namely the CJO's demands, claims and accusations as well as the issue of climate change across the different x-variables. With regard to the newspaper, there is a slight trend of the *taz* to include more of the demands and claims than the *SZ* whereas also three times as many “vague” demands. The different CJOs show a slight decrease of the demands towards *EG* in the case of the frames “climate change threat/urgency”, “intergenerational justice”, “Paris Agreement/1,5°C” and “Non-action-accusations”. Besides, the distribution of the frames across the CJOs corresponds with the CJOs' demands and claims and does not show any tendency towards one CJO. For the different time periods there is no trend observable. The same holds for the frames under the generic frame “Issue: Climate Change” across all x-variables. Except from H1, these findings do not support any of the hypotheses

Frames for substantive coverage

Codes/Frames	SZ	taz	FFF	XR	EG	Period1	Period2	Period3
Demands/claims	35	51	33	28	25	24	30	31
XR 3 demands	2	11	0	13	0	4	6	3
CC threat/urgency	19	18	19	12	6	13	11	13
Vague	9	26	13	12	10	9	9	17
Intergenerational Justice	3	2	4	1	0	2	1	2
Global Justice	3	11	4	3	7	3	2	9
System Change	5	9	5	5	4	5	6	3
Coal-Phase-Out	11	14	10	2	13	11	4	9
Paris Agreement/1,5°C	4	7	7	2	2	4	3	4
Net Zero Emissions	3	9	3	9	0	3	5	4
Non-action-accusation	18	24	22	13	7	10	11	20
Other demands/claims/accusations	10	23	12	11	10	6	9	18
Issue: ClimateChange	13	15	14	11	3	6	11	11
Neutral position	2	1	2	1	0	1	1	1
CC: Urgency: No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CC: Urgency: Yes	12	9	9	9	3	3	11	7
Solutions: individual/market-based	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Solutions: political/statist	3	4	4	3	0	1	3	3
Solutions: reformist	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
Solutions: radical	3	3	2	4	0	1	4	1
Responsibility: Every country	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Responsibility: North/historical	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1

Table 5. Distribution of demands- and issue-frames across x-variables

7.5. Substantive coverage and hypotheses

7.5.1. Hypothesis 1:

As *table 6* shows, more than 50% of the articles were not substantive in their coverage, while 21,3% were partly substantive and only 16,4% showed substantive coverage of the CJOs. This is in line with the distribution of frames (see *table 3*) with a clear majority of off-topic frames. The first hypothesis can thus be accepted, meaning that *the majority of newspaper articles did*

not cover the CJOs substantively but rather adhered to the protest paradigm (H1).

SUBCOV				
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	missing	6	4,9	4,9
	no	70	57,4	62,3
	partly	26	21,3	83,6
	yes	20	16,4	100,0
	Total	122	100,0	

Table 6. Non-, partly- and substantive articles

7.5.2. Hypothesis 2, 3 and 4:

Table 7 describes the substance of articles according to the different x-variables. It is important to note here that I am only interested in the absolute numbers and not in the proportion of i.e. substantive articles within all articles of one news institution. This is simply because the absolute numbers of coverage and substantive coverage are crucial to explore a newspaper's way of covering a CJO.

Distribution of substantive coverage

X-VARIABLES			SUBCOV			
CJO	Time Period	Newspaper	Missing	no	partly	yes
FFF	Period1	SZ	1	2	2	2
		taz	0	1	0	0
	Period2	SZ	1	4	2	2
		taz	0	4	0	0
	Period3	SZ	0	5	2	1
		taz	0	8	4	1
XR	Period1	SZ	0	1	0	0
		taz	1	1	2	3
	Period2	SZ	0	5	2	2
		taz	0	8	3	2
	Period3	SZ	0	1	0	0
		taz	0	3	4	1
EG	Period1	SZ	0	2	2	0
		taz	0	9	1	1
	Period2	SZ	0	3	0	0
		taz	0	11	0	1
	Period3	SZ	0	1	0	0
		taz	0	1	2	4

Table 7. Substantive articles across x-variables

7.5.3. Hypothesis 2:

By comparing the different news institutions and their coverage of *FFF*, it can be seen that the *SZ* shows more substantive as well as partly substantive coverage whereas the *taz* has more partly substantive articles in the third time period. The number of non-substantive articles is relatively equal in the first two time periods with a higher frequency in the third by the *taz*. The coverage of *XR* shows quite a different picture with more substantive and partly substantive articles by the *taz* but also more non-substantive ones. With regard to *EG*, the *SZ* clearly adheres to the protest paradigm while the *taz* has more articles which include the demands and claims of the CJO whereas equally having many articles which are poor in their substance. Overall, the *taz* shows more substantive reporting than the *SZ* for *XR* and *EG* while for *FFF* the opposite is true. In addition, the *taz* has a bigger share of all articles which covered the three CJOs with 62,3% compared to 35,2% in the *SZ* (see table 4). These findings speak for the “partisan protest paradigm” by M. J. Taylor (2017) and partly confirm the second hypothesis, namely that the CJO receives substantive coverage if its ideology is in line with the news institution’s political standing. Simultaneously, the *taz* wrote more articles than the *SZ* adhering to the protest paradigm.

			Newspaper		Total
			SZ	taz	
SUBCOV	Missing	Frequency	2	1	3
		% of SUBCOV	66,7 %	33,3 %	100,0 %
	no	Frequency	24	46	70
		% of SUBCOV	34,3 %	65,7 %	100,0 %
	partly	Frequency	10	16	26
		% of SUBCOV	38,5 %	61,5 %	100,0 %
	yes	Frequency	7	13	20
		% of SUBCOV	35,0 %	65,0 %	100,0 %
	Total	Frequency	43	76	119
		% of SUBCOV	36,1 %	63,9 %	100,0 %

Table 8. Substantive coverage per newspaper

7.5.4. Hypothesis 3:

Regarding the second independent variable, the CJO, *figure 1* and *2* (see section 7.1.) show that *FFF* received more overall coverage than *XR* and *EG* in both newspapers. Nevertheless, *XR*

received more substantive coverage with 8 articles compared to 6 for *FFF* and 6 for *EG*; the partly substantive articles are 11 compared to 10 and 5 respectively (see table 7). That is to say, the third hypothesis, namely that the *FFF* organisation receives more and rather substantive coverage than the *XR* or *EG* movement organisation has to be partly rejected since *XR* received the most substantive coverage while *FFF* received more than *EG*.

7.5.5. Hypothesis 4:

When comparing the different time periods, there is no clear trend towards Seguin et al.'s (2016) “positive feedback loop” observable, meaning that the CJOs receive more substantive coverage over time. Only in the case of *EG*, the *taz* covered the organisation more substantively in the third period. Additionally, there is neither a trend observable in the overall coverage (see figure 1 and 2). The fourth hypothesis “The substance of coverage increases over time and with the establishment of the CJO” has thus to be rejected.

8. DISCUSSION

The previous literature on social movements and the media which focussed on the protest paradigm theory fell short in some instances wherefore this thesis builds on those gaps and examined the substance of news coverage of climate justice organisations within the German press in general and determinants of that coverage specifically. It therefore sought to answer the research questions: *in what ways does the press treat climate justice organisations substantively?* And more specifically: *Does the news institution's ideology, the CJO's strategy and the time of existence of the CJO affect its treatment by the press?*

The findings indicate that the German press indeed adheres to the protest paradigm (H1), meaning that it delegitimises the climate justice organisations by focussing on protest information instead of their demands and issues. This thesis thus confirms previous evidence for the protest paradigm in various social settings (see von Weaver & Scacco, 2013; Mourão, 2019; Zabern & Tulloch, 2020). Regarding the independent variables, the findings show evidence for the ‘partisan protest paradigm’ (H2) what is to say that the centre-left newspaper *SZ* showed more substantive coverage for the moderate CJO *FFF* than for the rather radical *XR* and *EG*. Vice versa, the left-green newspaper *taz* had more substantive articles on *XR* and *EG* than the *SZ*, while having less on *FFF* which is surprising since the paper is expected to be equally in favour of a more moderate CJO. When comparing substantive coverage across the

different CJOs, no evidence was found for the hypothesis that the more radical CJOs would receive less substantive coverage (H3). Indeed, media theory suggests that organisations with radical actions receive more general coverage but less substantive coverage. This analysis revealed that the rather moderate *FFF* received more general coverage but less substantive coverage than the more radical *XR*. The results further do not support any assumptions on that the substance of coverage of a certain CJO changes over the time of its existence (H4). Quite obvious but still worth mentioning are the news attention cycles whereas the general coverage (all articles mentioning one of the CJOs) increases during the actions of the respective CJO and decreases within a few days after the respective action.

The research also has some limitations. First and due to the limited time-resources for this paper, the examined time periods cannot be fully representative for all of the news articles of the newspapers since it can surely be the case that in months which fell not under this sample, there might be various cases which discuss the CJOs and the issue of climate change more intensively what would relativise the non-substantive articles during other months since a news institution cannot report on a CJO's demands over and over again. Future research could thus build upon this research and examine the other time periods to fulfil the picture.

Second, the actual number of substantive and partly substantive articles is too small to make out any significant effects of the three independent variables. Nevertheless, the whole sample of 122 cases could have been big enough to see such effects but it is notable that there were only a few articles with substantive coverage. That is to say, more quantitative research is needed with a larger sample to make valid assumptions about the expected effects.

Third, such qualitative research and evaluations always struggle under the researcher's biases what is to say that what constitute 'substantive coverage' can be highly subjective. For instance, when a 1200-words article included literally one sentence like "the CJO demands the stop of coal energy within the next years" but discussed only information about the protests or the CJO's structures, I evaluated that article as "non-substantive". Here, future research could develop more thorough and differentiated conditions for the articles' evaluation.

Fourth, due to reasons of space, I excluded the type of an article, the exact length as well as the author's personality which might lead to biases – three additional variables which may be interesting to explore. Besides, more research on the coverage of SMOs with the same issue but different strategies is needed to find out how the news media's preferences for 'law and order' might discredit protest forms as non-violent direct actions.

Finally, there might have been a region specific bias in the analysis with the *SZ* being based in Munich (South-Eastern Germany) and the *taz* being based in Berlin (North-East). For

instance, the rebel week of *XR* in October 2019 in Berlin was slightly more covered by the *taz* whereas the *XR* action at Munich airport in August 2020 was covered thoroughly by the *SZ* but received almost no attention by the *taz*. Future research could therefore include more newspapers situated in the same city or region to avoid such biases.

9. CONCLUSION

The take-away of this research is that the protest paradigm is still present within the German press and probably within news media more generally. The consequences are twofold. Firstly, if Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model is still valid and the press merely reflects the elite discourse while marginalising alternative voices, our societies suffer under false perceptions of our reality and about what is actually 'out there'. Secondly, social movements play a decisive role in our societies to highlight the situations where the state fails to provide citizens with their basic needs. There is always only a certain proportion of an interest groups which participates politically since factors as time, income, education etc. determines if people are able or want to participate (see Kitschelt & Rehm, 2016; Wass & Blais, 2017). Said differently, social movements always represent only a proportion of a group with the same interests. That is to say, that movements need the media to transmit their messages to all parts of a society but if these messages are not reflected in the news and the movements delegitimised, they might not be heard sufficiently enough and could lose their purpose. In other words, when the news media does not include alternative voices, our societies risk missing social progress and provoke the consolidation of inequalities. The climate justice movement thus has to expand their repertoire of actions to keep the public's attention. Nevertheless, the CJM's influence is already visible: since 2019, climate protection rose to the top of political agendas worldwide and even the courts of justice start to recognise the state of emergency as the recent decision of the German constitutional court on the insufficiency of Germany's climate policies confirms (Oltermann & Harvey, 2021). The CJM itself is aware of the problem with the media: *Extinction Rebellion* will conduct a country-wide action on May 27th to criticise and raise awareness about the news media's inability to cover their cause adequately.

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