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PhD Project: Köpfe, Themen, Netzwerke – Das Wirtschaftsressort der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung von 1949 bis 1990 (Minds, Topics, Networks – The economic department of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung from 1949 until 1990)

Although it was Germany's leading newspaper from the 1960s until the 1980s, the history of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) is so far insufficiently researched. Especially the economic department of the FAZ was very important for the evolution of the newspaper. The founders linked their financial investment in the newspaper to their aim of supporting the free market economy with professional and influential economic journalism. The newspaper's economic department became a pioneer and ideal for economic journalism in Western-Germany after World War II.

Questions and theoretical concepts

- How did the economic department of the FAZ develop its specific regulative (ordoliberal) profile?
- What part did the economic department play in the ascent of the FAZ towards being the leading German newspaper?
- How did the economic department of the FAZ mediate economic and financial policy and how was it politicised itself? How was that mutual relation constructed?
- What maxims formed the editorial staff? How did the economic department develop its distinct compilation culture?
- How did structural couplings and irritations evolve between the economic department of the FAZ as a part of the media system and the functional systems of economy, policy and science (Luhmann's system theory)?
- Which key terms were formed and popularised by the economic department?

- At which times are caesuras and deferrals perceivable? How did the economic department react to the changes and challenges faced by the media in the 1970s?
- What is the correlation between the history of the Social Market Economy and the history of the economic department of the FAZ?

Historical sources

- digitalised full text archive of the FAZ (more than 4 million articles listed)
- Abatements of Erich Welter, Ludwig Erhard, Alfred Müller-Armack, Wilhelm Röpke, Walter Eucken e.a.
- Archive of the FAZ (editor protocols, intern scripts of the economic department)
- Archive of the CDU party

Conclusions to date (mainly for the 1950s)

- Already in the period from 1945 until 1949 an intense reporting and discussion about the future order of German post-war economy took place in the German newspapers.
- The FAZ was founded mainly to support the campaigners of the free market economy in Germany (Ludwig Erhard for example). Therefore the economic department was essentially important for the whole newspaper.
- In the 1950s the economic department used its close contacts to the ministry of economics for its reporting, journalists of the FAZ belonged to the inner circle of supporters of Ludwig Erhard in his time as minister of economics and chancellor until 1966.
- From the beginning, the economic department of the FAZ was based on the principle of ordoliberalism. Until his death in 1950 Walter Eucken helped to find proper journalists for the economic department.
- The whole economic journalism in Germany after 1949 was influenced by the economic department of the FAZ. It was temporarily the most important economic department in Germany because it had the ability to deliver background information because of its big editorial department and foreign correspondents. Furthermore, the staff was highly educated in economic science (most of them were PhDs) and the journalists had close contacts to decision-makers in policy and economy. The economic department of the FAZ acted as an example for economic departments of many other German newspapers.

→ The economic department of the FAZ was the most important public platform for economic journalism in Germany. It was clearly politically based on the ideals of the ordoliberalism and the concept of the Social Market Economy of Ludwig Erhard. The structural couplings between the department and the functional systems of economy, policy and science show the prominent role of the newspaper and its economic department.