The construction of spatial identities in the media

An analysis of how the mass media construct the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt in the context of Brexit

MASTER THESIS

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Abstract

INTEREST

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] n.d. [a]). Brexit, as this decision has come to be commonly referred to, will most likely affect most if not all areas of life in the United Kingdom and the EU, including the economy (e.g. Tetlow and Stojanovic 2018). However, the exact effects of Brexit, both in the short-, medium, and long-term, are difficult to predict, making for an uncertain situation and giving rise to a variety of potential scenarios (e.g. Inman 2019, Turnbull-Hall 2019).

An area which may be particularly affected by Brexit is the financial services industry. If the UK leaves the European Union and the Single Market, financial services firms will lose their ‘passporting rights’, which allow them to sell their services to clients across the EU without restrictions. To be able to further serve their clients in the EU post-Brexit, these firms would thus have to relocate to another EU country and apply for a license there (Chu 2017).

This has led to an increasing competition between European cities which aim to attract business from the UK, in particular London (Howarth and Quaglia 2018). For example, both Frankfurt, Paris and Dublin have been discussed as potential relocation destinations for companies currently located in the UK (Lavery, Barber, McDaniel, and Schmid 2017). The media have picked up this relocation debate as well, discussing scenarios related to the future of the involved cities, which is where this study comes in.

PREVIOUS LITERATURE

In the literature, it has been argued that the media play an important role with regard to how spaces, such as cities, and their spatial identities are constructed, or reconstructed, with potential perceptual and material consequences (Christmann 2016b; see also Robel and Marszolek 2018). Spatial identities may in this context be understood as multidimensional, consisting of both economic, political, and social dimensions (Burgess 1985, Choudhary 2014).

AIM

The aim of this study is to analyze how the media construct the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt in the context of Brexit. Extracting the future scenarios discussed for these cities, this study will thus seek to examine the following research question:

RQ: How do German and British daily newspapers construct the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt in the context of the relocation discussion and the uncertainty associated with and caused by Brexit?

DATA AND METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

42 articles from British and German daily quality newspapers were selected according to pre-defined search criteria and submitted to thematic analysis to detect patterns within the data and extract the scenarios that are discussed for the two case cities in the context of Brexit (cf. Braun and Clarke 2006).

FINDINGS

Frankfurt

In the case of Frankfurt, four themes were identified, relating to four facets of the city's spatial identity as discussed in the media: economic dimension, political dimension, social dimension and judicial dimension. For example, three different scenarios have been extracted with regard to Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity, which differ in how optimistically they assess the potential gains the city may record as a result of Brexit-related relocations. This indicates that multiple constructions of space, or spatial identity, may co-exist and compete against one another in the media, albeit with some overlap (cf. Christmann 2016b, Choudhary 2014). Connected to the economic dimension, scenarios relating to the social dimension of the city's future spatial identity have been discussed as well, including, for example, the potential marginalization of local residents on the housing and school markets, caused by the influx of Brexit-related workers. Here, differences between British and German media could be detected, with German media construing the potentially increasing competition for school spots as an issue for local residents while British media report more neutrally on this topic.

London

With respect to London, scenarios relating to the economic, political and judicial dimensions of the city's spatial identity have been construed. For example, with regard to its economic spatial identity, multiple constructions co-exist with partial overlap, with some newspaper articles predicting noticeable losses while others draw a more modest picture of the Brexit-related economic losses (cf. Christmann 2016b).

In addition to these themes, the present was constructed as being relevant for the future as well, from which the theme "influencing factors" was derived, relating to the cities' location advantages and disadvantages as well as the factor 'uncertainty'.

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1. Introduction

The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, commonly referred to as 'Brexit', has shaken Europe to the core. However, at the point of writing, the outcome of the Brexit negotiations and thus the exact impact of Brexit on the UK and the EU is still unclear. Since the referendum, the uncertainty associated with and caused by Brexit has given rise to a variety of potential future scenarios and predictions (e.g. Inman 2019, Turnbull-Hall 2019).

The financial industry in London may be particularly affected by Brexit: If the UK leaves the EU and loses its access to the Single Market, companies operating in the financial industry will most likely lose their passporting rights enabling them to conduct business in all EU states without restriction (Chu 2017). For this reason, many firms based in the UK and particularly the City of London have relocated or have considered relocating their operations to other EU member states in order to be able to continue to serve their clients and customers (Jones 2018).

1.1 Problem statement

In this context, especially larger European cities such as Frankfurt, Dublin, Paris, Luxembourg and Amsterdam and their surrounding regions have received much attention as potential relocation destinations for British companies and non-European companies that are currently located or have their European headquarters in the UK (Jones 2018). Howarth and Quaglia (2018, 1119) have referred to this increasing competition between EU member states including their major cities as a "'battle'", with the member states and their cities "[seeking] pro-actively to lure business from London" (ibid.).

The mass media have picked up this topic as well, speculating on the future of London and the European cities seeking to attract business from the UK, including Frankfurt, Germany, which has previously been referred to as the "financial capital of the Eurozone" (German Convention Bureau [GCB], n.d.).

Focusing on London and Frankfurt, I will try to shed light on the way in which the media construct the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt in the context of the relocation discussion and these times of change and uncertainty brought about by and associated with Brexit (cf. Christmann 2016b; Burgess 1985; Choudhary 2014). Drawing on theories from human geography and the sociology of space as they relate to communication and media studies, in this master thesis, I will set out to answer the following research question:

RQ: How do German and British daily newspapers construct the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt in the context of the relocation discussion and the uncertainty associated with and caused by Brexit?

1.2 Structure of this master thesis

This thesis consists of a total of five chapters, excluding the introduction.

In chapter two, I will review relevant **cross-disciplinary literature on space, spatial (re)construction and space-related identity**. This also involves an outline of the **theoretical framework** of this study, namely the communicative (re)construction of space and spatial identity in the media.

In chapter three, I will provide a brief **introduction to Brexit** and its impact on the United Kingdom and the European Union, which is the point of departure for this study. This will also involve a brief **consideration of the two case cities** under investigation.

Chapter four describes the **methodological foundation** of this study including the ontology as well as the data selection and analysis processes and methods.

In the fifth chapter, I will present and analyze the **findings**, relating them to the theoretical background and setting out to answer the research question.

Finally, in chapter six, I will conclude this thesis with a **summary, practical implications and an outline of potential future research opportunities**.

Potential limitations will be addressed throughout the thesis in the respective chapters.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

A major concern of this thesis is to find out how the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt are constructed in the media. That raises several central questions: What is space, how does come into being, and how does it relate to the media and identity construction?

In the following, I will provide an introduction to the concept, outlining briefly different approaches in the disciplines of geography, human geography and sociology as well as communication and media studies.

2.1 Literature review: What is space?

The conceptualizations of space in academia are manifold. They range from its theorizing as a concrete, physical manifestation in the world (e.g. in the discipline of geography, Rogers, Castree, and Kitchin 2013a) to the more abstract notion of space in, for example, the social sciences and the humanities, where space is typically not (only) regarded a physical phenomenon, but rather as socially produced and relational (e.g. Löw 2016a). As Merriman, Jones, Olsson, Sheppard, Thrift, and Tuan (2012, 4) put forward:

> "[I]t is precisely the multiplicitous and heterogenous nature of space and spatiality – as abstract and concrete, produced and producing, imagined and materialized, structured and lived, relational, relative and absolute – which lends the concept a powerful functionality that appeals to many geographers and thinkers in the social sciences and humanities." (Merriman et al. 2012, 4)

The aim of the following sub-chapters is to signpost the different concepts of space in spatial theory across disciplines, starting with the conception of space in the discipline of geography.

2.1.1 Conceptualizations of space in geography

According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), geography is "a science that deals with the description, distribution, and interaction of the diverse physical, biological, and cultural features of the earth's surface". In particular, the research focus is on the natural world and the spatial and environmental processes through which it is shaped (Rogers et al. 2013b).

With this focus on the natural world and the environment, the discipline is fundamentally concerned with the concepts of space and territory, which Crampton (2013, 385) encapsulates by describing geography as "the study of anything spatial". In geography, space has been understood to be "the geometrical dimensions of the universe through which objects move and interact", i.e. in which they are contained (Rogers et al. 2013c). Other researchers have conceptualized space in a similar fashion, conceiving of it as absolute and objective, independent of human beings, and spatial processes as measurable (Rogers et al. 2013c; Crampton 2013, 385; Miggelbrink 2009, 71). As Schroer (2008, 132-35) puts it, space in geography tends to be viewed as a physical, material and naturally given entity.

2.1.2 Conceptualizations of space in human geography and sociology

2.1.2.1 General introduction

Theories of space have also come to the fore in a discipline closely related to geography: human geography. Human geography is "the science of the spatial organization of human action and the relationships between society and environment" (Heidelberg University, n.d.). In other words, this discipline is particularly concerned with the relationship between human beings and the space surrounding them. Due to this dual focus, human geography can be regarded as a bridge between the disciplines of geography and sociology, combining their respective research foci (Scott and Marshall 2009).

The conceptualization of space in human geography deviates from that in geography. The idea of space as "a given, neutral, and passive geometry, essentialist and teleological in nature" is generally rejected; rather, space is conceptualized as "relational, contingent, and active, something that is produced or constructed by people through social relations and practices" (Rogers et al. 2013c). According to this position, spaces cannot be separated from human beings in that they are produced, i.e. made and given meaning by human beings, creating and influencing social relations (ibid.).

2.1.2.2 Spatial turn in the social sciences and the humanities

While the concept of space had already begun to come to the fore in the 1970s in human geography and the social sciences, as indicated above, it was only in the late 1980s and the 1990s that it became a systematic field of study (Baumgärtner, Klumbies, and Sick 2009). This theoretical steering towards space in the social sciences is generally referred to as 'spatial turn', a wording first used by Edward W. Soja in his book *Postmodern Geographies* (Soja 1989, 39, see also Döring and Thielmann 2008, 7). That space was becoming more important had already been predicted by Michel Foucault in his seminal paper "Of other spaces" (1986). In this paper, Foucault argues that while the study of time and history had been essential in the nineteenth century, the direction of research was shifting towards space. As Foucault (1986, 22) puts it:

> "The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed." (Foucault 1986, 22)

2.1.2.3 Conceptualizations of space in sociology

Like in human geography, thinkers within the sociology of space generally reject an absolute notion of space, with space argued to be relational and socially produced (e.g. Lefebvre 1991, Löw 2016a). To put it differently, according to Löw (2016a, vii), spaces, such as urban spaces, regions and nation states, are the result of social production.

In the following, I will briefly outline major works within the sociology of space to illustrate what is meant by the notion of space as relational and socially produced. Also, even though the role of communication has only been treated marginally in these theories, it is in the sociology of space that initial touchpoints between space and communication emerge (cf. Christmann 2016a).

2.1.2.3.1 Robert Ezra Park (1968): Space as a "state of mind"

For example, an absolute conceptualization of space is rejected by Park (1968). Focusing on the city as a unit of analysis, he puts forward that cities should not be reduced to their physical properties, but that they are also a mental construct. He writes the following:

> "The city is not […] merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature, and particularly of human nature." (Park 1968, 1)

Already here, the emphasis is on the view of space as a "product […] of human nature" (ibid.). Again, this marks a shift towards a conceptualization of space as a mental, social product rather than a fixed entity existing independent of human beings.

2.1.2.3.2 Henri Lefebvre: The Production of Space (1991)

One of the most influential works within human geography and the sociology of space is Henri Lefebvre's work *The Production of Space* (1991). Like other thinkers within human geography and sociology, Lefebvre sought to move beyond the 'space as container' way of thinking that had been prevalent in geography (Löw 2016a, 112). Instead, he proposed to think of space as a social phenomenon, or rather a "(social) product" (Bertuzzo 2009, 29).

To theoretically substantiate what he means by his idea of space as a social product, Lefebvre (1991, 38-39) proposes a conceptual triad, comprised of three central, interrelated elements: spatial practice ('perceived space'), representations of space ('conceived space') and spaces of representation ('lived space'). According to Zieleniec (2018, 7), "[s]pace is produced in a dynamic relationship between all three parts". Thus, they have to be analyzed together for the researcher to be able to derive an understanding of how space is socially produced (Bertuzzo 2009, 30).

To begin with, spatial practice (perceived space) refers to the "production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation" (Lefebvre 1991, 33). As Bertuzzo (2009, 30) indicates, this element of the conceptual triad has a physical dimension, in that "[t]he perceivable aspects of space are hereby concerned: material production and reproduction processes as well as specific places and spatial ensembles that are inherent to, and the starting point of, every social formation – be these a room, a street-corner, a square or a market". As Simonsen (1996, 503) points out, this dimension thus also has a social component as the physical space where social relations are formed.

This dimension is connected to the second dimension, representations of space, for it is through the representations of space that spatial practice is made "legible" (Löw 2016a, 112). Representations of space can be defined as "the conceptualised space constructed out of symbols, codifications and abstract representations" (Watkins 2005, 212). As Lefebvre (1991, 38) holds, it is "the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers". For example, plans and floor views, just like language and images, may be regarded representations of space (Bertuzzo 2009, 31). As Simonsen (1996, 503) argues, even though representations of space tend to be abstract, they can substantially influence the production of space, for example in planning and architecture. Communication is considered (implicitly) here: Through the consideration of, among other things, language, this dimension in Lefebvre's triad implies that communication may play a role in the production of space (Christmann 2016a, 12).

The third dimension, spaces of representation, or lived space, are “the everyday space that people produce, inhabit, and act within” (Bloch 2010, 2603). These spaces of representation have an experiential component (Watkins 2005, 213): They refer to “space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’” (Lefebvre 1991, 39; emphasis in the original). Central components through which space is lived include experience, sensation and imagination (Bloch 2010, 2603).

Overall, from a Lefebvrian point of view, “space consists of concrete materiality, mental conceptualisation, *and* experience”; thus, it both has a physical, a mental and a social dimension (Bertuzzo 2009, 32; emphasis in the original). Through his conceptualization of space as socially produced, Lefebvre (1991, 73) rejects the notion of space as a “simple object”; rather, he describes it as the “outcome of a sequence and set of operations” (ibid.), i.e. it has a processual or generative character (Simonsen 1996, 503). Lefebvre particularly emphasizes the role of knowledge and the cognitive in his work, conceiving of them as having “space-producing power” (Christmann 2016a, 13).

2.1.2.3.3 Anthony Giddens: The Theory of Structuration

Another theorist who has contributed to the sociology of space is Anthony Giddens. In the 1980s, he introduced the ‘theory of structuration’ to sociology (Giddens 1984). His theory addressed a focal division within the discipline, namely a division between micro-oriented approaches to sociology, focusing on individual human beings as unit of analysis, and macro-oriented approaches, studying the overarching social structures of society (Phipps 2010, 2709). Giddens disagreed with this approach. According to Canary (2017, 1688), Giddens’ structuration theory “views macro-processes [i.e. structures] and micro-processes [i.e. human agency] as inextricably linked through ongoing recursive social practice”.

Essentially, in his theory of structuration, Giddens (1984) suggests that there is a ‘duality of structure’ between human agency on the micro-level and social structure on the macro level: Neither of these two elements should be seen as having primacy over the other (Dyck and Kearns 2006; cf. Phipps 2010, 2709).

Agency, on the one hand, is understood as individuals’ capability to act, i.e. the “capability of doing […] things”, a proposition which implies power (Giddens 1984, 9). This definition also indicates that human beings as agents “could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently” (Giddens 1984, 9).

Social structure, on the other hand, is defined as “rules (and resources)” (Giddens 1984, 17). The term ‘rules’ may be described as “techniques or generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social practices” (ibid.: 21). A specific example of such rules may be formulated rules such as the law (ibid.), but rules and resources may also be more generally described as stocks of knowledge that agents draw upon and apply in their daily activities (Dyck and Kearns 2006).

The basic proposition in the theory of structuration, then, is that agency and structure are "mutually constituted" (Webster 2011, 48): According to Webster (2011, 48), "individuals rely on structures to exercise their agency, and, in doing so, reproduce and alter those very structures". Social structures are thus "simultaneously mediums and outcomes of daily human activity, or human agency" (Kellerman 1987, 267).

The concept of space also plays a role in Giddens' structuration theory. Christmann (2016a, 13) describes space in structuration theory as the "setting in which certain social practices take place, and these practices on their part constitute and repetitively socially reproduce the spatial setting". Action, practice and space can thus also be understood as mutually constituted. Space is seen as a social setting rather than a geographical entity, providing agents with a "frame or a horizon of meaning for interaction between agents, respectively" (ibid.). As Löw (2016b, 80) points out, communication may be relevant in the structurational understanding of space: It may be "part of the repetitive constitution of spatial-social reality" if the constitution of space is understood as a "nexus of doings and sayings" (Schatzki 1996, Hirschauer 2004, quoted in Löw 2016b, 80).

In conclusion, the focus in Giddens' theory in relation to space is thus on actions and practice, and not so much on knowledge and the cognitive dimension, as in Lefebvre (1991; cf. Christmann 2016a).

2.1.2.3.4 Martina Löw (2016a): Space as a product of spacing and human synthesis

Martina Löw's (2016a) focus in spatial theory was primarily to examine how the social and the material aspects of space could be united in one theory. Generally, from her point of view, social and material space should not be seen as two distinct entities since human beings as well as "plants, rocks or mountains can be a part of the same space construction" (Löw, Steets, and Stoetzer 2008, quoted in Christmann 2016a, 14; own translation).

From Löw's (2016a, 134) perspective, there are two processes of space constitution. The first process is referred to as "spacing", i.e. "the placing of social goods and people" (ibid.). Examples of this could be "how goods are displayed in the supermarket, how people position themselves toward other people [or] how houses are built" (ibid.).

The second process by which space is constituted is called "operation of synthesis", i.e. it refers to the process by which "goods and people are amalgamated to spaces by way of processes of perception, imagination, and memory" (Löw 2016a, 134-35). That is, through cognitive processes, goods and people are perceived and interpreted as spaces (Löw 2001, quoted in Christmann 2016a, 14). This shows that both spatial processes are usually interrelated and happen simultaneously, leading to a conception of space as relational (Löw 2016a, 135).

Overall, Löw (2016a) holds that space should be understood as a "processual phenomenon", which is "reproduced through repetitive actions" (Löw 2016a, 225). As Christmann (2016a, 14-15) suggests, once formed, spaces may affect and structure the action of its constituent parts, which stresses the relational approach taken by Löw (2016a). Here Löw's (2016a) position bears some similarity to Giddens' structuration theory, as outlined above (cf. Christmann 2016a).

2.1.2.4 Interim summary – The sociology of space

The approaches to space within human geography and sociology described above all theorize space as having a social and/or relational component, influenced and shaped by the human beings that are part of it. The container metaphor prevalent in geography is thus rejected. However, there are also differences between these approaches. As Christmann (2016a, 15-16) suggests, they differ with respect to what they regard as most important in the social construction of space. While, for example, Giddens emphasizes the role of action and practice in his theory of structuration, Lefebvre stresses the role of the cognitive dimension and knowledge (ibid.), and Löw (2016a) puts her focus on the reconcilableness of social and material space. What these approaches again have in common is that even though some of them mention or imply the potentially important role communication and language may play in the construction of space (e.g. Lefebvre 1991), these aspects tend to be treated only marginally (cf. Christmann 2016a).

2.1.3 Conceptualizations of space in communication and media studies

The concept of space as it relates to communication and the media has received attention in human geography from the 1980s and onwards, where researchers increasingly recognized the importance of communication in spatial theory. As Jansson and Falkheimer (2006, 7) state:

> "The linkage between geography and communication lies in the fact that all forms of communication occur *in space*, and that all spaces are produced *through representation*, which occurs *by means of communication*. In other words, theories of spatial production must also to a certain extent be understood as theories of communication and mediation." (Jansson and Falkheimer 2006, 7; emphasis in the original)

This emerging field within human geography and communication studies has come to be known as the 'geography of communication/communication geography' (e.g. Jansson and Falkheimer 2006). In brief, the field is concerned with "*how communication produces space and how space produces communication*" (ibid.: 7; emphasis in the original).

Human geographers have also started to increasingly study the media as they relate to geography. Early research within the field commonly referred to as 'geography of media/media geography' has looked at how spatial awareness is created in the media using a technique called 'place name counting', through which the researcher aimed to get an understanding of the intensity and spread of news reporting regarding certain places (Walmsley 1980; cf. Stöber 2006).

Another example from this early period is Blotevogel and Hommel's study on how regional consciousness is created in regional news reporting (Blotevogel and Hommel, presented in Wood 1989). Starting with a quantitative study to find out how often the region in question was mentioned in the media, the researchers also conducted qualitative research and looked at what news issues were reported on and how they were portrayed, among other things (ibid.). As Stöber (2006, 34) points out, Blotevogel and Hommel's research is based on the assumption "that media are an important source for the production and maintenance of spatial images and values".

After having studied the portrayal of riots in several British cities in British daily newspapers, Burgess (1985) argues that mass media play a vital role in creating meaning: According to the researcher, they are important in "the appropriation and interpretation of the meanings of social reality. They have the capability to shape conceptions of our physical, economic, political and social environments" (Burgess 1985, 194). In other words, the mass media are argued to have an influence on several different aspects of space, including physical, economic, political and social dimensions, a distinction which comes up in later conceptualizations of spatial identity in a similar fashion, as will be discussed later on in this chapter.

2.2 Theoretical framework: The construction of spatial identities in the media

Even though the relationship between communication, the media and space has received some attention in empirical research, as outlined above, Christmann (2016a) notes that this line of inquiry has not been further developed in *theory*. With the advent of the theoretical orientation called 'communicative constructivism', however, this is slowly beginning to change (ibid.).

In the following, I will describe the theoretical framework that forms the basis of the empirical study undertaken in this thesis. This description will start with a brief consideration of communicative constructivism, followed by Christmann's (2016b) theoretical deliberations regarding the role of mass media in the communicative reconstruction of space. Subsequently, I will discuss how communication, the media and spatial identity may be considered within one theoretical framework.

2.2.1 Central propositions of communicative constructivism

The concept of communicative constructivism is closely related to the concept of social constructivism proposed by Berger and Luckmann in their book "The Social Construction of Reality" (1966) and can be regarded as a continuation of it (Keller, Knoblauch, and Reichertz 2013, 9). Broadly speaking, from a social constructivist perspective, reality is viewed as a social construct. Thus, reality, from this viewpoint, does not exist independent of human beings but is constructed between them (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

While studying how reality comes into being and is socially constructed between human beings in interaction, researchers started to notice the central role that communication plays in this process. In meticulous empirical analyses, it was discovered that communication was the means through which the construction of reality took place (Keller, Knoblauch, and Reichertz 2013, 11). It was now increasingly acknowledged within this stream of research that communication was central to the constitution of the social world, a perspective which has come to be known as communicative constructivism (ibid.). Researchers supporting this paradigm started to deviate from Berger and Luckmann's idea of social constructivism in that they held that "empirically, all social action is necessarily *communicative* action" (Knoblauch 2016, 29; own translation; own emphasis). From this point of view, communication, according to Keller, Knoblauch, and Reichertz (2013, 13; own translation), is "not just a means which people employ to intentionally convey messages and try to control others; it is also a human practice through which both identity, relationships, society and reality are constituted". It thus forms the basis of social reality (ibid.). In addition, as Reichertz (2013, 51) suggests, communication does not only constitute these facets of the world; it also ascribes meaning to them and can be used to establish and legitimate power and inequality. Overall, from a communicative constructivist perspective, communication is more than language and talk; it also covers non-verbal aspects such as clothing, hygiene and action, among other things (Reichertz 2013, 52).

2.2.2 The communicative reconstruction of space

Inspired by this new theoretical orientation, Christmann (2016a) put the relationship between communication and space on the theoretical research agenda, calling for a more systematic and theoretical approach to study the communicative construction of space (Christmann 2016a, 7). According to Christmann (2016a, 7; own translation), space and communication should be researched together because it is through communication that "spaces can become an intersubjectively shared, i.e. social, reality".

From a communicative constructivist point of view, space is conceived of as dynamic and fluid. Thus, in research, the focus is not only on "the way in which constructions of space come into being or become solidified or institutionalized, respectively, but also – as the term "(*re*)construction of space" suggests – the way existing constructions of space are modified or restructured, respectively" (Christmann 2016b, 90; own translation).

2.2.3 The role of mass media in the communicative reconstruction of space

According to Christmann (2016b, 111-12), local mass media play an important role in the communicative reconstruction of space. They are not only the channels through which information and news are distributed, and the audience is reached; instead, Christmann (2016b, 111) suggests that the mass media are powerful actors in the public: They select and stage the news and the information that they present; this way, they can exert significant influence on what is discussed in public and what is not. Thus, by making certain voices heard while others are left mute, local mass media can shape the communicative reconstruction of space. It is also possible that multiple accounts of space, i.e. different reconstructions of space, co-exist, which potentially overlap or compete against one another (ibid.).

But it is not only *local* mass media that influence public discourse and the reconstruction of space in what will from now on be referred to as exemplary 'SPACE A' (cf. Christmann 2016b). Even national and international media can exert influence on the reconstruction of SPACE A. For example, national and international media inform local audiences in SPACE A of other spaces (e.g. other cities, regions, countries) as well, providing them with "knowledge that they have not (or cannot have) immediately experienced themselves, but which might still be relevant for SPACE A" (Christmann 2016b, 111). This knowledge should not necessarily be seen as objective; multiple constructions of other spaces may co-exist. As Christmann (2016b, 112) argues, inhabitants of SPACE A perceive this information and use it to construct a certain image of these other spaces presented in the media, each one with its own characteristics and qualities. Likewise, through the construction of other spaces in the media, inhabitants of SPACE A may form a new perception of their own space as well *compared* to the other spaces, and media construction of spaces may also more generally inspire new ways of seeing the world and encourage actions. For example, cooperation between neighboring towns may be launched or abandoned, depending on how certain spaces are reconstructed in the media. Thus, how mass media construct, or reconstruct, space may have actual perceptual and material consequences (Christmann 2016b, 111-12).

2.2.4 Communication, the media and spatial identity

As the previous outline has shown, communication and the media may be argued to be central to the constitution of reality and space. But communication and the media have also been linked to more specific aspects of reality and space: To recap, according to Keller, Knoblauch, and Reichertz (2013, 13; own translation; own emphasis), communication is also "a human practice through which both identity, relationships, society and reality are constituted". Here, the researchers point to the concept of identity, arguing that it is constituted through communication as well. Christmann (2016b) also implies that there is a connection between the media, space and identity even though she does not use the term 'identity': When outlining the role of the (local, national, international) mass media in the reconstruction of space, Christmann (2016b) suggests that when reporting on certain spaces, the media convey the particular qualities and characteristics of the spaces in question to the audience, whose members then use this information to construct an image of the respective spaces, or of their *spatial identity*, as it has been referred to in the literature. According to Rogers et al. (2013d), spatial identity is defined as the "identity or perceived image of a place, as opposed to identities of individuals who live there", which is implied in Christmann's (2016b) description outlined above. Rogers et al. (2013d) further describe the term as follows:

> "Each place has characteristics that make it unique and which help shape a sense of place and how it is viewed and perceived. This spatial identity changes over time, evolving with material changes to the environment, and discursive portrayals of the place in the media and through place marketing campaigns." (Rogers et al. 2013d)

As the authors state, spatial identities may evolve over time, and the media may play a role in this process (ibid.).

Thus, overall, communication, the media and spatial identity can be argued to be interlinked. Referring to one of her earlier works, Massey (2004) joins the concepts of space and identity in her research, describing both as relational:

> "If space is a product of practices, trajectories, interrelations, if we make space through interactions at all levels, from the (so-called) local to the (so-called) global, then those spatial identities such as places, regions, nations, and the local and the global, must be forged in this relational way too, as internally complex, essentially unboundable in any absolute sense, and inevitably historically changing." (Massey 1994, quoted in Massey 2004, 5)

From this perspective, spatial identities are constructed and shaped in interaction and are thus of relational nature, just as space is widely seen as relational in the sociology of space (cf. Löw 2016a).

However, to think of spatial identity as one undifferentiated concept would be too simplistic. In his paper on spatial identities in the era of globalization, Choudhary (2014, 44) puts forward that identities should be conceived of as multilayered and multidimensional: Spatial identities may consist of generalized economic, social and political dimensions. Here, his outline bears some similarity to the dimensions of the environment put forward by Burgess (1985), as described above. Choudhary (2014, 44) further holds that these dimensions may subsume other identities as well, such as gender identity or class identity. Also, as the author points out, identities may be multiplicious: Multiple, sometimes contradictory identities may co-exist (ibid.).

2.2.5 Media and the communicative construction of spatial identities

This view of both space and identity as relational constructs has inspired a new stream of research within communication and media studies. Building on Massey (2004), Robel and Marszolek (2018, 153) suggest that media play a significant role in spatial identity construction (or what they call 'space-related identity; ibid.). The authors write:

> "*[M]edia* not only mirror changeable ideas of space and connected ideas of collective identities but play a decisive role in their construction" (Robel and Marszolek 2018, 153; emphasis in the original)

In their research, Robel and Marszolek (2018) have analyzed the space-related identities of the German cities Hamburg and Leipzig from a historical perspective, focusing on the 1950s. In particular, they examined how the media constructed these cities, with a particular view to how global reference points were produced and connected to local characteristics (ibid.: 152). For example, they found that global references were used frequently for both cities (e.g. "'Hamburg, the gate to the world'", ibid.: 158). In the case of Leipzig, these references were usually embedded in a local perspective, whereas global references dominated over local references in Hamburg (Robel and Marszolek 2018). One explanation for the frequent occurrence of global references that the authors give is that both cities tried to "enhance their claim to be part of the world" (ibid.: 158) in a period where Germany and the rest of the world were divided by the Cold War.

2.2.6 Conceptualization of space in this thesis

Bringing these conceptualizations of space, the media and identity together, in this thesis, I adopt the position that space, or more precisely, spatial identities, can be argued to be constructed through mediated communication (e.g. Christmann 2016b, Rogers et al. 2013d, Massey 2004, Robel and Marszolek 2018). In particular, the focus will be on the construction of the future spatial identities of two cities.

2.2.7 Potential limitation of this study and terminological considerations

2.2.7.1 Potential limitation of this study

It should be noted that in theory, communicative constructivism holds that communication is more than just language but also covers non-verbal modes of communication (cf. Reichertz 2013, 52-53). This thesis, however, only looks at one facet of communication, namely written language as conveyed by the media, which may be regarded a potential limitation since not the entire spectrum of possible communication modes was considered. How this study may be further developed in the future to yield a more full-fledged communicative constructivist analysis is outlined in the last sub-chapter under 'Opportunities for future research'.

2.2.7.2 The concept of 'place identity'

As the literature review and the outline of the theoretical framework have shown, this thesis is based on theories from the fields of spatial theory and the communicative construction of space, involving fundamental concepts such as space, identity and others. However, in research, there is a general fuzziness regarding the meanings of these fundamental concepts, which is also true of the concept of identity as it refers to space/place. As Kalandides (2011) points out, there are many different definitions of the term 'place identity', for example in literature on place branding: Sometimes this term is used to refer to the image individuals have of a certain place, while other times it refers to the distinct characteristics of a place, almost conceived of as its "objective reality" (Kalandides 2011, 29). This is also the reason why the definition given by Rogers et al. (2013d), described above, is not optimal if Kalandides (2011) line of thinking is followed: The researchers blend the ways to define identity by describing spatial identity as "the identity or perceived image of a place […]". But then, again, it could also be argued that identity should not be seen as entirely separate from image, which is also implied in Christmann's (2016b, 111-12) account on the (re)construction of space: The qualities and characteristics of space, constructed by the media, contribute to forming an image of these spaces among the recipients, which is why these two concepts can be seen as closely interlinked. The term 'identity' is used in this thesis, though, to tie in with the academic discourse on this topic (e.g. Robel and Marszolek 2018).

2.2.7.3 'Space' vs. 'place'

This discussion leads to the next terminological consideration: the difference between space and place. Sometimes the term 'place' may be used to refer to 'space' as it is used in the sociology of space (cf. Kalandides 2011), while other times the concepts are viewed as separate from one another. A researcher who has devoted an entire book to this question, providing yet another theory of space, is Yi-Fu Tuan (1977). As he points out, the concepts are often mixed (Tuan 1977, 6). Even though he agrees that 'space' and 'place' cannot be entirely separated from one another since they "require each other for definition" (ibid.), he puts forward that they are not the same. In brief, he defines these two terms as follows:

> ""Space" is more abstract than "place". What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (Tuan 1977, 6)

In his theorization, Tuan (1977) takes an experiential stance: He argues that it is through experience, for example thought and feeling, that this shift from space to place takes place. Tuan's (1977) contribution on the difference between space and place has been significant in human geography. As

Cresswell (2008, 55) states: "Tuan forced geographers to stop taking these words for granted and to consider what they might mean for being human."

In this thesis, the word 'space' is used since it is the term used in the spatial theories that this thesis draws on.

3. Background: Brexit and its impact on the United Kingdom and the European Union

This chapter will provide a brief overview of Brexit, the point of departure for this thesis, as well as its expected impact on the United Kingdom and European Union with regard to selected aspects relevant for this thesis.

It should be noted that at the time of writing, the Brexit negotiations are ongoing, and no withdrawal agreement has been ratified by the British parliament. This chapter was finalized on May 25, 2019. Events or developments after this date are thus not within the scope of this thesis.

3.1 Brexit: The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union

3.1.1 The referendum

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom held a referendum on its membership in the European Union. In total, 46,501,241 citizens were allowed to vote. The turnout was 72.2%. Overall, 51.9% of the electorat voted to leave the European Union, while 48.1% voted to remain (BBC, n.d. [a]).

3.1.1.1 Euroscepticism in the UK

The decision to hold this referendum can be seen as a result from a long history of Euroscepticism in the UK. The UK joined the EU in 1973 (Helm 2016). Its wish to join the EU was primarily economically motivated (von Ondarza 2016). While Euroscepticism had been present before, it grew stronger in the 1980s. From the perspective of Eurosceptic parliamentarians, the European Economic Community (EEC) had become too ambitious by aiming to create closer integration on levels other than the economy as well. Critics feared it would endanger the independence of the member states and suppress national identities. At this stage, though, the aim of the criticism was not to withdraw from the Common Market but to limit its ambitions (Helm 2016).

With the adoption of European contracts such as the Treaties of Amsterdam and Maastricht, Europe, indeed, became more closely integrated, which further deepened the tensions between pro- and anti-EU sides in the UK (ibid.). The United Kingdom agreed to sign the treaties because it had succeeded in circumventing some of their central provisions furthering more integration, among others the adoption of the common currency, the Euro, in 1999 (von Ondarza 2016). Despite the concessions Britain was able to get from the EU, it was in the aftermath of the signing of these treaties that the option of leaving the Union was first put on the table by Eurosceptics from the Conservative party (Helm 2016). The Euroscepticism came even more to the fore in the aftermath of the financial crisis 2008/2009 and the Euro crisis in Greece, which contributed to reinforcing the perception in the UK that it was a risk for the country to be part of the EU (von Ondarza 2016).

To put an end to the debates about the UK's membership in the European Union, then-Prime Minister David Cameron pledged in January 2013 that he would put the question on the UK's membership in the EU to a public vote in a referendum if he was re-elected as Prime Minister in the next General Election, which he was. Subsequently, the House of Commons paved the way for the promised referendum, which was, then, held on June 23, 2016 (ibid.).

3.1.2 The negotiations

Even though the decision made in the referendum was not legally binding due to parliamentary sovereignty, the UK government, headed by the new Prime Minister Theresa May, insisted on implementing it to honor the democratic process, coining the statement "Brexit means Brexit" in the process (Mardell 2016; Siddique 2016). The UK invoked Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty on March 29, 2017, officially giving the EU notice of its intention to leave the Union (European Council/Council of the European Union, n.d. [a]).

The official negotiations between the UK and the EU were taken up on June 19, 2017. Among the issues discussed were citizens' rights, the Northern Irish border, financial aspects as well as the future relationship between the UK and the EU as such. The parties agreed on a withdrawal agreement and a declaration regarding their future relationship in November 2018, which the leaders of the remaining 27 EU member states approved on November 25, 2018 (ibid.). Key provisions of this deal include an agreement on a transition period, and it defines the financial settlement the UK would have to pay to meet its financial obligations towards the EU, sometimes called the "divorce bill", which is estimated to amount to at least £39bn (BBC 2018).

However, this deal was rejected by the British parliament. In particular, the proposed backstop agreement regarding the British-Irish border met with parliamentary resistance (Pérez-Peña 2019). In the 'backstop' agreement, the whole of the UK would remain part of a temporary customs union with the EU (e.g., no tariffs) and Northern Ireland, at least to some degree, part of the Single Market after the end of the agreed-upon transition period on December 31, 2020, unless the parties agree on some other arrangement during the transition period. The backstop would apply until another arrangement, such as a free trade deal, is agreed on or until both parties by mutual agreement decide to end the backstop. However, Brexit supporters have strongly rejected the idea of Northern Ireland being separated from the UK in any way. Also, the backstop could not be ended unilaterally, which has upset

Brexit proponents, who fear that the UK could indefinitely remain a member of the customs union with the EU, unable to strike its own deals (Bensch 2019; European Commission 2019; Sandford 2019).

Because no agreement could be reached, in March 2019, the UK government sought an extension of Article 50 from the EU until June 30, 2019, which the EU unanimously approved in an amended version: If Parliament approved May's deal in a third vote before March 29, the original exit date, the EU would grant the UK an extension until May 22 to give both parties the chance to prepare. If the House rejected May's deal again, the new exit date would be April 12 (European Council/Council of the European Union, n.d. [a]).

The deal was rejected again. Shortly after, on April 5, 2019, May asked the EU to extend the exit deadline further until June 30, 2019. The EU agreed to the extension request, though setting the extension deadline to October 31, 2019 (ibid.). On May 24, 2019, Theresa May announced that she would be stepping down as Prime Minister on June 7, 2019, with her successor yet to be determined (Fox News 2019).

3.2 Brexit and its consequences for the UK and the European Union

Brexit will most likely have an impact on most if not all areas of life, both in the UK and the EU, including the economy (e.g. Tetlow and Stojanovic 2018). How far-reaching and profound the impact will be depends largely on whether the UK leaves the Union with a withdrawal agreement in place or not, which has yet to be determined (e.g. Turnbull-Hall 2019). It would be beyond the scope of this study to address all areas that could be affected by Brexit, which is why I will only give a brief overview of the consequences of Brexit for the aspects most relevant to the present study. Subsequently, I will briefly describe the two case cities under investigation.

One of the areas that could be particularly affected by Brexit is business. For example, the UK's impending exit from the European Union may have consequences for companies currently located or headquartered in the UK: If the UK leaves the Single Market, financial services firms may lose their so-called 'passporting rights', which allow them to sell their services across the EU from the UK without having to establish a subsidiary in every EU country. If these firms lose their passporting rights, they thus lose the right to do business across borders and serve their clients in other EU countries. In order to retain these passporting rights and benefit from the Single Market system, they would have to establish a subsidiary in another EU country and obtain a license in this country (Chu 2017). As of September 2016, approximately 5,500 firms in the UK possessed an EU passport (Treanor 2016).

But it is not only financial services firms which are affected by Brexit. Other companies such as Sony and Panasonic have relocated their headquarters to another EU member state due to potential disruption and trade barriers that may be erected between the UK and the EU when the UK leaves the

Union (Inman 2019). Thus, the (potential) need for relocation does not only affect the finance industry but may be relevant cross-sectorally.

Especially due the loss of passporting rights of financial services firms located or headquartered in the UK, there has been increasing competition between other EU cities to attract business from the UK, in particular the City of London. These competing EU cities include, for example, Frankfurt, Paris and Dublin, which in some studies have been referred to as potential "Alternative Financial Centres" (AFCs; Lavery, Barber, McDaniel, and Schmid 2017). Since the referendum and up until this point in time, though, the exact outcome of Brexit is still unclear, resulting in an uncertain situation (Inman 2019).

3.2.1 The case cities: London and Frankfurt

It is here that the present study comes in. The media have picked up the topic of the increasing competition between London and other EU cities, in many cases, as can be seen later, speculating on the future of the cities involved in the competition. Among these are London, the UK's capital, and Frankfurt, which have been selected as case cities for this study.

3.2.1.1 Case city 1: London, United Kingdom

The first case city under consideration is London. London is the capital of the United Kingdom and one of the most competitive financial centers in the world, ranking 2nd behind New York, according to the Global Financial Centres Index (Long Finance 2019, 4). Roughly 730,000 employees work in the financial industry in The City of London, the city's financial quarter (Lavery et al. 2017, 2). Apart from this, London is known to be a world metropolis, rich in culture and home to a diverse population (Mayor of London/London Assembly, n.d.).

As the capital of the United Kingdom and the financial center of Europe/the UK, London may (or may not) be particularly affected by Brexit, which is why it was chosen as a case city in this study.

3.2.1.2 Case city 2: Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Frankfurt was selected as case city because among the cities discussed as AFCs in Europe (e.g. Dublin, Paris), it is the most competitive financial center on a global scale. This may make it interesting to examine how it may be affected by Brexit, as compared to London. For example, according to the Global Financial Centres Index, Frankfurt is the third-most competitive financial center in Europe after London and Zurich, overall ranking 10th (Long Finance 2019, 4), and it has previously been referred to as the "financial capital of the Eurozone" (GCB, n.d.). According to Lavery et al. (2017, 2), roughly 75,000 people are employed in the financial industry in Frankfurt. Apart from its attributes relating to finance, Frankfurt is known for its renowned universities as well as its position as a trade fair location (GCB, n.d.).

With the introduction of the case cities under investigation, I will now move on to the empirical part of this thesis. To briefly recap, the research question under investigation is:

RQ: How do German and British daily newspapers construct the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt in the context of the relocation discussion and the uncertainty associated with and caused by Brexit?

4. Methodology

This section marks the beginning of the empirical part of this thesis. I will first the describe the general methodological considerations, providing accounts of the ontological and epistemological background that informed my research strategy and the concrete research design, which will be subsequently elaborated on as well. Following this, I will describe the data material in depth, explaining how the data were selected and subsequently analyzed. The following figure provides a simplistic overview of the research process (figure adapted from Grix 2002, 179; original figure: Hay 2002, 64).

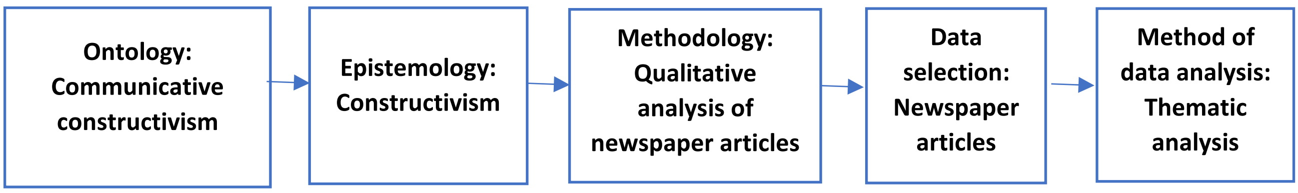

Figure 1: overview of the research process (adapted from Grix 2002, 179; original figure: Hay 2002, 64)

4.1 Ontological and epistemological considerations

4.1.1 Ontology

Before embarking on a research project and selecting a method and the required data material for analysis, it is important to clarify what ontological considerations went into the research strategy and design. The term 'ontology' refers to "the philosophical study of the nature of existence or reality" (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017, 27). As Rehman and Alharthi (2016, 51) put it: "Researchers have assumptions (sometimes implicit) about reality, how it exists and what can be known about it". Providing an account of the ontological considerations that informed the methodological choices is crucial since it reveals how the researcher makes meaning of the collected data (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017, 27).

The research paradigm and thus the ontological point of departure informing the research strategy of this study is communicative constructivism, which ties in with the theoretical framework of this study. To briefly recap, the central proposition of communicative constructivism is that reality is constructed through communicative action, including language and other modes of communication (cf. Knoblauch

2016; Keller, Knoblauch, and Reichertz 2013). However, since this theoretical orientation has been outlined in depth above, I will refrain from describing its tenets again here.

This ontology has informed the design of this study because it reflects the way in which reality is regarded in this thesis: as constructed through communication, in this case the media. From this viewpoint, reality can arguably be best understood by deep-diving into the depiction of this reality in the media, enabling me, the researcher, to explore how these spatial identities are constructed and which (potentially) different constructions are discussed in the media (cf. Mertens 2009).

4.1.2 Epistemology

According to Bryman (2012, 27), epistemology concerns itself with "the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline". In other words, it deals with how knowledge is gained, i.e. the ways "how we come to know what we know" (Grix 2002, 177).

In line with the constructivist ontology, this study takes a constructivist epistemological stance. Constructivism is an epistemological position which holds that truth and meaning are "created by the subject's interactions with the world" (Gray 2013, 20). From this perspective, meaning does not simply exist and can be discovered, as believed in positivism (cf. Gray 2013, 20), but is constructed between an individual and his or her surrounding world, a position implying that multiple meanings may co-exist (ibid.). McNamee (2012, 152), referring to Gergen's (2009) view of constructionism, further describes meaning as a relational construct, created between those involved in the research in a collaborative process.

The constructivist approach aptly reflects the approach to knowledge in this empirical study: As I, the researcher, perceive and process the data, I also interpret it, making sense of what is conveyed to me. Thus, the knowledge I later arrive at has been constructed through my engagement with the data in an interpretive process, enabling me to gain an understanding of the (potentially) different meaning constructions created in the media (cf. McNamee 2012, 152).

4.1.3 The researcher's role

At this point, it is necessary to briefly consider the role of the researcher in the research process.

Because of the close involvement of the researcher in interpreting the data (e.g. McNamee 2012), it is important for the researcher to be reflexive, i.e. to "understand the significance of the knowledge, feelings, and values that they brought into the field to the research questions that they came to formulate, to the analytical lenses that they chose to employ, and to their findings", which Attia and Edge (2017, 35) refer to as "prospective reflexivity". Thus, regardless of how objectively a position or statement is presented, the question of how objective the respective position or statement truly is remains unanswered, raising other questions such as “What other constructions are possible?” (Reichertz 2013, 65; own translation). Reichertz (2013, 65; own translation) summarizes this paradigmatic issue of (communicative) constructivism as follows: “Researchers are never simply the ones who describe [the world and its communicative constitution]. They actively shape this world. Thus, they are also perpetrator.” This emphasizes the need for the researcher to be transparent in the data collection and analysis process, since he or she, from a constructivist point of view, is seen as an active participant in the reality and knowledge construction, which may affect the objectivity of the research (Losantos, Montoya, Exeni, Santa Cruz, and Loots 2016, 30; Reichertz 2013, 65; Attia and Edge 2017, 35).

4.2 Research strategy: Qualitative research

In line with the ontological and epistemological considerations, a qualitative research design was chosen for this study.

Generally, the aim of qualitative research is “to understand the subject not to measure it” (Rasmussen, Østergaard, and Beckmann 2006, 93). As such, it often focuses on meaning and is used in exploratory studies seeking to answer open-ended questions such as “How?” and “Why?” that can help understand the phenomenon under investigation in depth (McGill Qualitative Health Research Group [MQHRG], n.d.; Creswell 2014, 18). Qualitative research may also be descriptive if the aim is to give detailed accounts of complex phenomena such as social dynamics. In terms of the concrete approach to the data and data analysis, qualitative research often proceeds inductively, i.e. taking its starting point in the data and deriving more general conclusions (e.g. concepts, theories, hypotheses) from it (MQHRG, n.d.).

A qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study since the objective was to *explore* and gain an in-depth understanding of how the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt are constructed in the media in the context of Brexit. Also, the aim was to discover the *variety* of scenarios discussed, i.e. to examine what the McGill Qualitative Health Research Group (n.d.) refers to as “plurality of voices” in the discussion of the future of these cities, which is a common goal of qualitative research (ibid.).

4.2.1 Quality assessment criteria in qualitative research

Reliability and validity are often used as criteria when assessing the quality of research, especially in quantitative research when it comes to determining the quality of the measurements made (Bryman 2012, 389). On the one hand, the term ‘reliability’ refers to “the consistency of a measure of a concept” (Bryman 2012, 169). Validity, on the other hand, denotes “the issue of whether an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept” (ibid.: 171). However, these criteria inherently pose a challenge to qualitative research due to its fundamentally different orientation than quantitative research, since the focus is, as mentioned, not on measuring concepts but on understanding and describing complex phenomena (Creswell 2014; MQHRG, n.d.).

Because of this, other researchers suggest that qualitative research needs to be evaluated using other criteria than reliability and validity. For example, the criteria trustworthiness and authenticity have been brought forward as alternative evaluation criteria (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Guba and Lincoln 1994, quoted in Bryman 2012, 390-93). Trustworthiness covers other aspects such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. For instance, dependability entails that every step of the research process is documented, and all procedures explained. Furthermore, authenticity can be ensured by taking into consideration the wider impact of one's research, including aspects such as fairness to different viewpoints (ibid.: 392-93).

4.3 Research design: Analysis of newspaper articles

As discussed in the literature and theory section, the mass media can play a vital role in the construction of space and spatial identities (e.g. Christmann 2016b, Robel and Marszolek 2018). As can be inferred from this, in this empirical study, I will draw on the mass media to obtain material for analysis to explore my research topic. Simply put, mass media can be defined as "the various ways, especially television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, by which information and news are given to large numbers of people" (Collins Dictionary, n.d. [a]). This term has come to encompass the Internet as well (e.g. Morris and Ogan 1996)

In this study, I chose one specific type of mass medium for analysis: newspaper articles. While mass media may not have an immediate impact on attitudes and behaviors of people, they have been argued influence awareness and knowledge of certain topics, thus shaping public attention (McCombs 1972). Even in the case of daily news reporting, which generally has the pretension to be neutral and impartial (e.g. BBC, n.d. [b]), news articles may display an (implicit) bias. Paalman (1997, 89) describes it as follows:

> "Mass media communications do not happen in a vacuum. Although the journalistic ideal is objective and balanced reporting, journalists are themselves part of society and subject to ideologies and to external influences. Communication is never value-free." (Paalman 1997, 89)

This perspective puts forward that even in daily news reporting, the communication brought forward by journalists is influenced by society and values.

I chose to focus on the more traditional mass media and not, for example, social media because social media are increasingly prone to be used to manipulate public opinion, among other things. As a report by Oxford University points out, "[t]he manipulation of public opinion over social media platforms has emerged as a critical threat to public life" as these media may be used "to spread junk news and disinformation, exercise censorship and control, and undermine trust in the media" (Bradshaw and Howard 2018). While this is, of course, not always the case, I chose more traditional mass media to secure a higher degree of reliability and trustworthiness.

4.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of document analysis

Before explaining how the articles for this study were selected and analyzed, I will briefly outline the advantages and disadvantages of this research design.

Documents such as newspaper articles are a common source of data in qualitative analysis (Bryman 2012, 543-61). Bowen (2009, 27) defines document analysis as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material".

The advantages of analyzing newspaper articles, as documents, include that they are non-reactive, or unobtrusive, sources of data, that is, sources of data that have not been created for research purposes and thus did not involve the presence of a researcher in the creation process (Bryman 2012, 543; Paalman 1997, 90; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest 1966; Lee 2000). Thus, they have not been subject to the effects caused by the presence of the researcher, as could be the case in, for example, interview studies. either (Lee 2000, 2; Bryman 2012, 543). Conversely, using documents as non-reactive sources of data may enhance the validity of the data in this respect (Bryman 2012, 543). Moreover, documents are particularly suitable for qualitative case studies, i.e. "intensive studies producing rich descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organization, or program" (Stake 1995, Yin 1994, quoted in Bowen 2009, 29).

Disadvantages of using documents in research include that they may provide insufficient detail and context since they have not been designed and produced for research; thus, they may lack detail to fully answer the research question (Bowen 2009, 31-32). Moreover, Bryman (2012, 553) points out that in the case of newspaper articles, authenticity issues may arise, especially if the authorship of the material under investigation cannot be determined.

To counter these potential issues, I selected data from reliable sources and accessed them through trustworthy news databases and the original archives of the newspapers under investigation, to which I had access through my university library accounts, thus securing a high degree of reliability and authenticity.

4.4 Method of data selection

4.4.1 Initial considerations and search terms

At the outset of this study, it had not been defined what type of articles in what newspapers would be relevant, apart from the requirement that they somehow elaborate on and focus on the future of the cities under investigation, London and Frankfurt, in the context of Brexit. The initial stages of the data selection process were thus characterized by a trial-and-error approach (cf. Cambridge English Dictionary, n.d.), through which I aimed at familiarizing myself with the data in order to be able to develop sensible search criteria for my article selection.

To find suitable articles for the media analysis, I used the research platform "LexisNexis Academic" (http://academic.lexisnexis.eu.zorac.aub.aau.dk/), which provides "access to full-text news, business, and legal publications" (LexisNexis, n.d.). I accessed the portal through my student account at Aalborg University. On LexisNexis, researchers have several options at their disposal to search for suitable newspaper articles and other publications, for example the "Easy Search" function" and the "Power Search" function in the "General Searching" section as well as the "News" searching tool.

To get a sense of what kind of articles I would find concerning my research topic, I initially used the "Easy Search" function and only employed the three search terms "Brexit", "London" and "Frankfurt" in my search. The three terms were chosen for the following reasons:

- Using "Brexit", I could make sure that the results were related to the point of departure for my study: the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union. Also, I assumed that it could be expected that any discussion of Frankfurt and London in the context of this decision would carry a reference to this term.
- Using the proper names "London" and "Frankfurt", I ensured that these two cities, the foci of my research, were included in the article.
- Because these search terms are quite general, referring to Brexit generally and to the proper names of two cities, I decided to join the terms by the Boolean operator "AND". By applying Boolean logic and this operator, I could make sure that the search engine would only give out results in which all of these three terms are present to narrow and focus my search (JSTOR 2019). Also, since the aim of this study was to analyze the way the spatial identities of London and Frankfurt are constructed in the media in the context of the relocation discussion, I assumed it could be reasonably expected that both cities are somehow mentioned together in the articles.

- I chose not to specify the concrete subject matter, industry or department (e.g. Economy, Politics, etc.) in the search because I did not want to limit the results aspect-wise but leave the search open to all potential scenarios in all areas.

This initial search led to thousands of research results, which is why I recognized that I had to refine it further.

4.4.2 Refinement of the search process: Introduction of further search criteria

4.4.2.1 Focus on German and British newspapers

First, I decided to focus my search on German and British newspapers, excluding newspapers from all other English- or German-speaking countries such as the US, South Africa, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Austria. By only including newspapers from these two countries, I aimed at extracting the scenarios discussed in relation to London and Frankfurt in the countries that directly have a stake and an interest in the future of the respective cities. This way I could take a closer look at how newspapers in Germany and the UK have constructed the city located in their own country, and how they have constructed the city in the other country, respectively, providing me with the opportunity to examine potentially different constructions.

4.4.2.2 Consideration of further search terms

Second, I set out to modify my computer-assisted search using other criteria. Initially, I added other search terms to my search, trying out different combinations of the words and the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" (e.g., "Consequences", "Folgen"; cf. JSTOR 2019), but these searches did not yield results that could help me answer my research question.

4.2.2.3 Consideration of genre as filter

As a third step, I used the "News" search function to filter my results according to genre (e.g., editorials, comments), but the articles found were not suitable for my research since they did not elaborate on the future of either of the cities under investigation but focused on other topics, which is why the criterion "genre" was dismissed as well.

4.2.2.4 Introduction of article length as search criterion

Following this, I introduced the search criterion "article length" to my search. After trying out several combinations, I settled on the minimum article length of 401 words. By defining the minimum length of the selected articles, I could ensure that they went into some depth with their respective thematic focus, while I also aimed at avoiding superficiality.

4.2.2.5 Specification of search period

As a next step, I also chose to restrict the time frame. As a starting point, I selected June 23, 2016, the date the referendum took place. This date was chosen because it made the hitherto hypothetical discussion of the UK leaving the Union more concrete and highly likely, if not definite, requiring the country and the EU to begin preparations (cf. background section). Questions such as those regarding the future of London, and Frankfurt, now became highly relevant, since Brexit would (most likely) happen. The cutoff dates for the data selection were May 6 and 7, 2019, on which the final article selection took place. Articles published after this date were not included in the search.

4.2.2.6 Introduction of publication mode as search criterion

Furthermore, I decided to focus on print articles in my search. Even though the overall print circulation of newspapers and magazines tends to decline (Varsani 2016), print media have some advantages over digital media. Advantages include that print media are enduring: They allow readers to be exposed to the media repeatedly, with the media being physically present in the environment, for example on a table (Klein, n.d.; Kokemuller 2017). In addition, while online articles tend to be rather short and concise to account for the risk of distraction and the decreased attention span many users have when browsing online, print articles tend to be longer and hold readers' attention, since these readers are less likely to be multitasking when reading an article, and they are less likely to skip it due to the effort they have invested in selecting an article, e.g. time- and money-wise (Klein, n.d.; Steele 2015). Due to this, it seems likely that print versions of newspapers elaborate more than their online versions, which is suitable for a study looking to exploratively examine the future spatial identities of two cities in the context of Brexit.

4.2.2.7 Introduction of publication frequency as search criterion

Beyond that, I considered both daily and weekly newspapers initially, but due to the lack of suitable articles in weekly newspapers such as "Die Zeit", I decided to focus on daily newspapers. Daily newspapers, as the term indicates, are published daily (in most cases Monday through Saturday) and are directed at a general readership (Die Zeitungen, n.d.). Daily newspapers are important in that they shape public opinion by reporting, commenting on and analyzing current events as well as giving background information (Kommission zur Ermittlung der Konzentration im Medienbereich [KEK], n.d.; see also Paalman 1997 and above).

4.2.2.8 Introduction of newspaper market segment as search criterion

In addition, I decided to focus on a specific newspaper market segment, namely the quality press. The term 'quality press' refers to "the more serious newspapers which give detailed accounts of world events, as well as reports on business, culture, and society" (Collins English Dictionary, n.d. [b]). Even though it might generally also be interesting to look at how the tabloid press constitutes and compares the cities or even to compare these two types of press, I chose the quality press to secure a high degree of reliability. Furthermore, I selected one type of press only to reduce complexity: The focus of this research was to find out how *British* and *German* media, the quality press in particular, construct the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt and how the coverage in these countries compare overall, which is already a complex endeavor; an additional dimension such as another type of press would have added further complexity, which is why I dropped this search option.

4.2.2.9 Exclusion of specialized newspapers

On top of that, to avoid an a priori focus on business, the economy, the stock exchange, real estate or other fields, specialized newspapers such as the "Financial Times" and "Handelsblatt" were excluded from the search.

4.2.2.10 Introduction of qualitative search criteria

Since the number of articles found was still very high, I decided to introduce other, more qualitative criteria to my search, i.e. criteria related to the content of the articles. I chose the following criteria for the subsequent final selection:

- The central requirement for the selection of articles was that the articles had to be forward-looking, i.e. involve a discussion of the future. Backward-looking articles or those focusing only on the present were excluded.
- Articles that only briefly mentioned the future in one sentence were excluded as well, since this would not allow the analysis to go into depth. Thus, the extent of elaboration had to be at least two sentences or more.
- A high number of articles only briefly mentioned expectations regarding the future roles of these cities, e.g. that Frankfurt would gain importance, London would keep/lose influence, or similar, without giving details or elaborating on the meaning of this. Even though statements like these indicate what scenarios the respective articles find likely, they are not explicit or concrete. Thus, only articles that discuss the future of London and Frankfurt more explicitly and concretely were included.
- Articles focusing on specific companies, mentioned in the heading or the subheading, were eliminated since the focus was on the cities and not specific corporations. If specific companies were discussed in the text as part of a broader discussion of the future of the cities, the respective articles could be included.
- In a similar fashion, articles focusing on the opinion of a specific person, mentioned in the heading or the subheading, were excluded as well, since the focus was not on the opinion of specific persons but on a broader discussion of the cities. If specific persons were quoted or their opinions discussed in the text as part of a broader discussion of the future of the cities,

the respective articles could be included. For this reason, genres such as interviews and portraits were excluded as well.

- Most if not all articles described the expected job moves due to the loss of passporting rights of financial companies, as described in the background section. This, clearly, is a discussion of the future, but since the vast majority of articles mentioned this aspect, I decided to exclude these articles in the logic of the Boolean operator "NOT" (cf. JSTOR 2019) *unless* they described the *meaning* of these job moves or went beyond this, e.g. describing other aspects of the future of the cities.
- The search also resulted in articles discussing other European cities to which London and Frankfurt are compared, e.g. Paris and Dublin (cf. background section). Articles primarily focusing on these other cities were excluded to sharpen the focus of the article selection on Frankfurt and London. Only articles that involved a discussion primarily of both Frankfurt and London or one of those cities alone, could be included. If another, third city was discussed, articles were only accepted as long as London and Frankfurt and their future were also represented at least as much as or more than the other city/cities in the article.
- Articles focusing on implications of Brexit for Germany and the UK as countries were excluded as well to secure a clearer focus on London and Frankfurt and not only on the broader implications of Brexit on the country level. If these countries were discussed in the text as part of a broader discussion of the future of the cities, the respective articles could be included.

4.4.3 Article search in British newspapers

With these criteria in mind, I launched a search on LexisNexis using the "Power Search" function. I chose this function because it enabled me to add specific criteria such as article length to my search, which the other search engines did not.

In the search template, I entered the three search terms "Brexit", "Frankfurt" and "London", joined by the Boolean operator "AND". I specified the dates, using the option "Date is after 22.06.2016" to include all articles published on June 23, 2016 or after up to the cutoff date. To find articles from British media, under "Source", I selected "All English news" and added the section search "Length > 400" to determine the minimum article length, adding it to the search using the Boolean operator "AND".

Due to the high number to search results, which in this first search round included news from all English-language media outlets and not only newspapers, I decided to focus on specific British print media from the quality press segment. I chose the following five British newspapers:

The Times

The Times is the biggest (circulation-wise) British daily newspaper from the quality press segment. As of June 2018, a circulation of approximately 428,000 copies was recorded (Statista, n.d. [a]). Generally considered a conservative newspaper, it has also shown support for the political left in the past, which makes its overall editorial stance mixed (BBC 2009). Along with The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian, it is considered “one of Britain’s “big three”” (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. [a]).

The Daily Telegraph

The Daily Telegraph is the second-biggest British daily newspaper, considered quality press and one of the “big three” newspapers in Britain, see above (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. [a], [b]); Statista, n.d. [a]). The Daily Telegraph had a circulation of 370,000 copies in June 2018 (Statista, n.d. [a]). Its editorial stance is generally considered conservative, which is why it is sometimes referred to as “The Torygraph” (BBC 2009).

The Guardian

The Guardian is a British daily newspaper from the quality press segment (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. [a], [b]). As of June 2018, it had a circulation of approximately 138,000 copies (Statista, n.d. [a]). It is considered one of Britain’s most influential newspapers along with The Times and The Daily Telegraph (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. [a]). Its political orientation is usually considered left-leaning (BBC 2009).

The Independent

Since 2016, The Independent has only been published in a digital-only format (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. [c]). Even though it does not exist in print format anymore, The Independent was selected because of its large audience, both in its current format and in its former print format: In March 2017, for example, approximately 4.49 million people in the UK visited the website of the Independent (www.independent.co.uk; Statista, n.d. [b]). While it was still published in print format, the circulation of The Independent reached 428,000 at its peak (BBC 2016). Its orientation is typically center-left, but it is not linked to any specific party, which is where it gets its name from (BBC 2009).

The London Evening Standard

The London Evening Standard is a free British daily newspaper, published Monday through Friday (eurotopics, n.d.). As of April 2019, approximately 855,030 issues are distributed daily in the London and Greater London area (Audit Bureau of Circulation [ABC], n.d.). Its political stance is considered conservative (eurotopics, n.d.). The newspaper is known for its local reporting (ibid.) and was added to the article selection to add a more locally-oriented perspective to the study and possibly shine a light on particularly regional topics in London in the context of Brexit.

This search led to 149 results. Even though most articles found in the search mentioned the expected job moves from London to other European cities, among those Frankfurt, very few of them elaborated on (other) future scenarios and went into more detail. Due to the low number of suitable articles, I decided to apply a more flexible approach and expand my search for British articles to include both online articles of the above-mentioned media as well as articles with more than 300 words instead of 400. I decided not to loosen the other, more qualitative criteria because the material was already thin, and I aimed to avoid thinning it out further.

Overall, 16 articles from British daily newspapers were selected according to the above-described search criteria. An overview of these 16 articles can be found in appendix B, with the original articles downloaded from LexisNexis in appendix C.

4.4.4 Article search in German newspapers

A similar search was carried out to find articles in German newspapers, using the same search criteria as in the initial search for British articles (German news only, 3 search terms, minimum word length 400, date restriction). To focus my research, I filtered the results according to media outlet. I decided to include the four largest (circulation-wise) transregional daily newspapers from the quality press segment (non-tabloid and non-specialized) plus one regional newspaper from the Frankfurt area:

Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)

Süddeutsche Zeitung is the biggest transregional German daily quality newspaper based on the number of editions sold in the first quarter of 2019, where more than 338,000 printed issues were sold (Statista, n.d. [c], [d]). Its political orientation is typically regarded left-liberal (FAZIT Communication/Federal Foreign Office, n.d.).

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung is the second-biggest transregional German daily quality newspaper (Statista, n.d. [d]). Its print circulation amounted to 241,670 copies in the first quarter of 2019 (ibid.). Its editorial stance is generally described as conservative-liberal (FAZIT Communication/Federal Foreign Office, n.d.).

Die Welt

Die Welt is a transregional German daily quality newspaper, published Monday through Saturday (Die Welt, n.d.). In the first quarter of 2019, 119,100 editions of Die Welt including Welt Kompakt were sold

(Statista, n.d. [d]). Politically, it is considered conservative (FAZIT Communication/Federal Foreign Office, n.d.).

Die Tageszeitung (taz)

Die Tageszeitung is the fourth largest non-specialized newspaper from the quality press segment in Germany. In the first quarter of 2019, 46,875 editions of this newspaper were sold (Statista, n.d. [d]). According to its own website, Die Tageszeitung used to be a left-leaning newspaper, but today it describes itself as independent (Die Tageszeitung, n.d.). Other sources describe the newspaper as alternative and critical of the political system (FAZIT Communication/Federal Foreign Office, n.d.).

Frankfurter Neue Presse, including regional editions (FNP)

Frankfurter Neue Presse is a regional newspaper published Monday through Saturday in and around Frankfurt am Main, Germany. It focuses on regional topics from the area and its different constituent parts that are of particular importance to the local society, and it sees itself as “a piece of home and the connecting link between the events in the region and around the globe” (RheinMain.Media [RMM], n.d.; own translation). This newspaper was selected to add a regional perspective to the data set to be able to shed light on regional interests and issues in the Frankfurt area as they may come up in the discussion of Frankfurt and London in the context of Brexit.

Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung are not included on LexisNexis, which is why a separate search was carried out for these two newspapers using their own search archives. These two processes will be described further below.

117 articles in the three newspapers available on LexisNexis mentioned above were found. Of these, ten articles were deemed suitable for analysis in line with the search criteria.

4.4.4.1 Article search in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Süddeutsche Zeitung

A separate search was carried out in the archives of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Süddeutsche Zeitung. I used my library account at Goethe University in Frankfurt to access and download the selected articles.

In the archives of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (http://www.faz-biblionet.de), I used the expert search mode to find suitable articles. To ensure consistency, I used the same three search terms joined by the Boolean operator “AND”, the date restriction as well as the minimum word count (401) and the publication mode (print-only) as search criteria.

The search led to 387 results. All articles were scanned based on the above-mentioned criteria. A total of 32 articles matched the criteria.

A similar search was carried out in the archives of Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ; http://librarynet.szarchiv.de/). Three search terms joined by the Boolean operator "AND", the date restriction, the minimum word count of 401 as well as the publication mode (print-only) were used as search criteria.

173 results were found. All articles were browsed, and 18 articles met the search criteria.

4.4.4.1.1 Introduction of an additional selection mode

As can be seen from these numbers, the search in the archives of Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung led to a higher number of potential articles for analysis than the search in the other media outlets. To reduce these pronounced discrepancies and align the field, a qualitative data selection approach called purposive sampling (sometimes called *purposeful* sampling, cf. Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon 2015), in particular Maximum Variation Sampling, was applied to the preliminary article selection in Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Purposive sampling "reflects a group of sampling techniques that rely on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g., people, case/organisations, events, pieces of data) to be studied" (Sharma 2017, 751). It is also known as "judgmental, selective or subjective sampling" (ibid.).

A specific type of purposive sampling is Maximum Variation Sampling. Maximum Variation Sampling refers to the "[s]earching for cases or individuals who cover the spectrum of positions and perspectives in relation to the phenomenon one is studying" (Palys 2008, 698). It enables the researcher to illuminate variation, hence the name, and thus "look at a subject from all angles, thereby achieving a greater understanding" (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016, 3).

I found this technique suitable to further reduce the number of articles in the two newspapers because of the explorative, qualitative nature of the study, whose aim it is to identify as many *different* future scenarios as possible, i.e. the range of possible scenarios (the "plurality of voices", cf. MQHRG, n.d.), and not so much to find out how prevalent or pronounced the respective scenarios are in quantifiable terms. This sampling strategy was thus employed to fulfill the objective of the research (cf. Crossman 2018).

There are, however, some disadvantages associated with the technique. One of the major downsides of purposive sampling is its proneness to researcher bias due to the subjective judgment of the researcher applied during the sampling process (Sharma 2017). This, however, is only an issue "when such judgements are ill-conceived or poorly considered; that is, where judgements have not been based on clear criteria", as Sharma (2017, 752) notes. Another disadvantage of purposive sampling and maximum variation sampling, in particular, is that in order to be able to select samples displaying the entire spectrum of perspectives one has to know the range of variation, which is often not the case at the start of a study (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, and Hoagwood 2015, 536). In the present study, however, this challenge was counterbalanced since the number of articles to choose from in SZ and FAZ was manageable. Also, even though the application of this data selection technique introduced some variation and subjectivity to the data selection process and could be argued to diminish cross-data consistency to some degree, I found it reasonable to treat the newspapers individually, i.e. adapt the process to the needs of the specific media, to close the large gap between newspapers with regard to the number of articles selected per medium to avoid an overemphasis on specific newspapers.

As an alternative sampling technique, I also considered random sampling to select articles. One of its advantages, according to Palinkas et al. (2015, 534), is that it "ensure[s] the generalizability of findings by minimizing the potential for bias in selection". Even though this technique would have secured objectivity in the final selection process, I decided not to implement it since it would have eliminated potentially relevant perspectives from the data.

Using Maximum Variation Sampling, I selected articles from Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung that represent and reflect the future-oriented aspects discussed in these media.

In Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, I identified eight different broad topics/foci. For each of these foci, I selected the article that elaborated most on the respective topic, resulting in a total of eight articles from FAZ, which can be found in appendices D and E along with the articles from other German media. In cases where an article combined several topics, I selected it, too, to account for this combination. The following foci were found:

- International schools in Frankfurt
- Office space in Frankfurt
- Real estate in London
- Euro clearing
- General article on Frankfurt and Brexit, real estate
- Commercial courts in Germany/Frankfurt
- Potential relocation of EU institutions to Frankfurt and Bonn
- Real estate in Frankfurt

In the articles from Süddeutsche Zeitung, I also identified the major topics of the 18 articles and selected an example of each. In cases where an article combined several foci, I selected it as well to account for this combination. In total, I selected eight articles. The topics included the following:

- Euro clearing

- Real estate in London and Frankfurt
- EU institutions
- Founders in London
- General article on Brexit and Frankfurt, real estate market
- Real estate in Frankfurt
- Social ramifications of Brexit for Frankfurt
- The future of the financial markets including Frankfurt

Overall, 16 British newspaper articles and 26 German media articles, hence a total of 42 articles, were selected for the analysis of the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt as they are constructed in the media in the context of Brexit. A list of all articles, the articles themselves and a bibliography of all primary data sources (LexisNexis, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung) can be found in the appendix (appendices A-E).

4.5 Method of data analysis: Thematic analysis

To analyze the data, I chose to employ thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 79), thematic analysis is a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". As the researchers point out, thematic analysis "can usefully summarize key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a 'thick description' of the data set" (ibid.: 90). According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 82), a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (ibid.: 82; emphasis in the original).

I found thematic analysis suitable as a method of data analysis for this study since it allowed me to provide a thick description of the data (i.e. the future as it is discussed for London and Frankfurt), which I could then group, interpret and put into context to examine how the media construct the spatial identities of London and Frankfurt. It thus enabled me to describe the patterns in the data and extract the future scenarios that are constructed in the context of the relocation debate.

4.5.1 Thematic analysis: A six-step procedure

Braun and Clarke (2006, 86-94) suggest a six-step procedure for conducting thematic analysis, which I will outline in the following. In each step, I will first describe the theoretical background, followed by a description of how I applied this to my own data set. It should be noted that this process is generally not linear but recursive, involving moving back and forth between the different phases (ibid.: 86).

1. Familiarization with the data (Braun and Clarke 2006, 87-88)

This first step entails becoming familiar with the data set. This requires the researcher to read and re-read the data in order for him or her to become fully immersed in the data and develop first ideas of what the data may offer (ibid.).

This first step was also an important step in my data analysis process. Already during the data selection process, I engaged with the (potential) data, reading through the articles to determine whether they related to my topic and would provide suitable material for answering the research question. In addition, after selecting 42 articles for analysis, I read every article thoroughly to get an overview of my entire data set. I also noted down initial ideas, which were at first rather unstructured but became clearer as the process went along.

2. Generation of initial codes (Braun and Clarke 2006, 88-89)

The next step involves identifying initial codes within the data. A code is defined as "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzkis 1998, 63, quoted in Braun and Clarke 2006, 88). Codes and themes differ from one another in that themes are usually broader; codes form the basis for the themes to be derived at a later stage (ibid.).

There are two broad approaches to the coding process: It may proceed in an inductive way ('inductive thematic analysis') and in a deductive way ('theoretical thematic analysis'). That is, codes and themes may be derived from the data themselves (data-driven approach), or they may be based on some pre-existing theory from which they are derived (ibid.: 83-84). Regardless of the approach taken, Braun and Clarke (2006, 89) recommend proceeding systematically and thoroughly. Their advice is threefold: First, the researcher should code as much of the data as possible because he or she "never [knows] what might be interesting later." Second, the researcher should also pay attention to the surrounding data of a coded extract and include this data in the code as well to make sure that context is not lost in the process. Third and last, he or she should keep in mind that chunks of data may be "uncoded, coded once, or coded many times, as relevant" (ibid.).

In the coding process, I primarily proceeded inductively, that is, I examined the data and derived codes from them, initially without a direct connection to any pre-existing theory. This is because even though the main theoretical framework of this study, Christmann's (2016b) theorization on the (re)construction of space in the media, has given me a broad understanding of how spatial identities may be created in the media, it does not provide any categories from which the codes, or later the themes, could be derived. However, some deductive reasoning was involved in the coding process as well. Even though the core theory does not offer any specific categories, other research within the field has shown what facets space, or spatial identities, may consist of. For example, Burgess (1985) and Choudhary (2014) both put forward that space can be argued to have different dimensions, including an economic, a political and a social dimension.

To start with, I read through every article and used a highlighter to mark the extracts to be coded in line with the qualitative search criteria outlined above. For example, excerpts about other cities or background information and other descriptions irrelevant for answering the research question were not coded. However, in some instances I also marked extracts on the present situation in Frankfurt and London *if* these extracts were presented as somewhat having relevance for the future spatial identities of these cities as well. This is in line with what Braun and Clarke (2006, 89) recommend: I paid close attention to surrounding data and thus context to avoid that meaning gets lost in the coding process. Also, common sense suggests that in order to be able to speak about and make predictions of the future, the present, if relevant, needs to be considered as well as the starting point from which the future develops.

In addition, I had already noticed during the familiarization process that the points and aspects raised in the articles were in many instances presented as contingencies, or causal relationships were established or implied between the points brought forward in the articles. For instance, these contingences and other relationships could be expressed through language: My initial observations included sentence constructions such as "if XY happens, then XY happens", or "XY happens only if XY happens" (or similar). Sometimes, these relationships between the aspects in the data were implicit, but these relationships in the data, implicit or explicit, are what I set out to reveal in the coding process.

This is why I chose to employ a rather detail-oriented approach to the data. The goal was to find out how the data chunks and the codes relate to one another, and how they are embedded within one another. When coding the data, I initially looked at every article individually to examine which points it raises and what kind of connections it makes between these points. In other words, the focus was on the construction process on the local-oriented level (the individual articles) at first; only at a later stage, when deriving broader themes from the data, I considered all articles together, looking at parallels and differences to elicit what different constructions the newspapers put forward, comparing their constructions when relevant.

Initially, I developed broad codes that captured the meaning or the essence of the extract under consideration. To give an example, if the author of the article under investigation mentioned the expected job loss in London, I coded it and named it "potential economic losses in London with respect to jobs", or "Job loss in London" if the relocation of jobs had already taken place and was now made relevant in the discussion of the future. In most cases, I also paid attention to context where relevant to capture the meaning of the surrounding data as well, for example, if examples of relocations were given. I then divided these broad codes into their constituent parts (e.g. examples, contingencies, potential facilitators/barriers etc.) to reveal their relationships between one another and in relation to the overarching code. These embedded codes were then again divided up into their respective constituents (if any), and so on. In the coding process, I followed the structure of the text. For example, if paragraph A was about the job relocation, paragraph B concerned the general competition between the EU cities and paragraph C was again about the job relocation, I coded the relocation aspect twice, because it was made relevant twice in the text. While this process may have been (overly) cumbersome in hindsight, I proceeded this way to understand the reasoning and the structure behind the articles to get a better picture of how they construct the spatial identities of the cities examined. This is why sometimes data chunks capturing the same kind of meaning have been coded on different levels, depending on where and how they were presented in the text.

This coding process led to a very extensive table with a code hierarchy, which can be found in appendix F. For better reference, the original excerpts have been added in the very right column. Each superordinate and each embedded code have received a specific code reference.

3. Search for themes (Braun and Clarke 2006, 89-91)

The third phase begins once the researcher has identified the different codes across the data set. The aim of this phase is to find out how the different codes can be combined and sorted into broader categories: themes. This phase also entails looking at the relationships between the codes, potentially leading not only to themes but also sub-themes.

Braun and Clark (2006, 84) argue that there are generally two types of themes the researcher may look for: semantic themes and latent themes. Semantic themes capture the "explicit or surface meanings of the data". The analytic process, then, consists of two steps, description and interpretation:

> "Ideally, the analytic process involves a progression from *description,* where the data have simply been organized to show patterns in semantic content, and summarized, to *interpretation,* where there is an attempt to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications […]" (Patton 1990, quoted in Braun and Clarke 2006, 84; emphasis in the original)

Thematic analysis involving latent themes attempts to go beyond what is explicitly said or written, looking at the "*underlying* ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – and ideologies – that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun and Clarke 2006, 84; emphasis in the original).

In the coding process and the subsequent search for themes, I initially set out to identify semantic codes and themes to capture the surface content of the data and get an overview of what facets of London and Frankfurt the articles bring up, which is why the coded data extracts (see appendix F) are rather descriptive in nature. This also served to identify the relationships and dependencies between the data chunks. However, I left the surface level afterwards and went on to *interpret* the data and the relationships between the codes to derive broader themes and sub-themes from them.

Already during the coding process, I had started to use mind maps to see how the data extracts connected to one another. After coding the data, I then moved on to finding themes. To do so, I printed out the table containing the codes and used colors to group them. A recurring topic, for example, was economic information, relating to jobs, assets, businesses and the like. I chose the color green for this category, in three different shades. Light green was used for codes specifically relating to Frankfurt and its economic situation. A slightly darker shade was used for codes that do not zoom in on any specific city and its economic position; this code was thus used for extracts specifically discussing *both* London and Frankfurt, or London and European cities, including Frankfurt, in general. Dark green was then used for codes referring to London only. Splitting the economy-related data up this way, I could better see where the articles put the focus, even though in the analysis not all distinctions were deemed relevant later. But in line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendation, I coded as much data as possible, in as much detail as possible to be able to potentially reveal any patterns the data may show, even though not every detail proved relevant later.

I proceeded to categorize the other data in this way as well, using colors for recurring codes and categories and different shades where deemed relevant. From these broader categories I later derived and continuously refined the overarching themes, presented in the next chapter. The color-coded code table can be found in appendix F, including an explanation for the different colors, the code references as well as the codes themselves.

4. Review of themes (Braun and Clarke 2006, 91-92)

This step involves refining the preliminary themes devised in step three. The preliminary themes may be merged, or some themes may be discarded if there is too little substance to them or a lack of data material supporting them. For example, this phase involves looking at the entire data set to assess if the thematic map, i.e. the overview of all themes as they relate to one another, "reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole" (ibid.: 91).

After having identified the preliminary code categories and overarching themes in my data, I went on to the analysis part. I printed out the color-coded code table again and started to note down on a piece of paper the different codes that were subsumed under the preliminary themes that I had previously identified (e.g. economy-related theme: codes in three different shades of green). In this process, I realized that some codes fit another theme better, or that actually one code fit two categories (or later, themes). I adapted my code table accordingly, using two colors for the same code when relevant. While this kind of overlap would be problematic in a quantitative content analysis (cf. the requirement of "mutually exclusive categories", Bryman 2012, 303), I did not find it to be problematic here because it seemed to represent the data, which consist of interrelated data chunks (cf. Braun and Clarke 2006, 91). This partial re-coding and re-categorizing of the codes during the analysis process also reflects what Braun and Clarke (2006, 86) mean when they refer to thematic analysis as an iterative process.

5. Definition and naming of themes (Braun and Clarke 2006, 92-93)

In the fifth step, the researcher defines and names the identified themes, capturing the "'essence' of what each theme is about" (ibid.: 92). Before producing the final report, the researcher should now know how the themes fit into the overall picture that the data conveys, how they relate to each other and to the research question and what "story" the different themes tell (ibid.). This step also involves identifying sub-themes, if any, which can be used to break up a complex theme and "demonstrate the hierarchy of meaning within the data" (ibid.).

While I had already refined the categories, themes and sub-themes in step four, for example by reassigning colors to the codes or by identifying potential overlap, I assigned preliminary names to the themes, which, however, were modified again during the writing process as the analysis unfolded. The final themes and sub-themes are presented in the next chapter.

6. Production of the report (Braun and Clarke 2006, 93)

The final step involves writing the report, in which the researcher presents the findings along with examples that reflect the story that the data tell (ibid.).

The final report presenting the findings can be found in the next chapter.

4.5.2 Advantages and disadvantages of thematic analysis

One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it is a rather open method of data analysis that can be used in a wide variety of qualitative research contexts since it is not tied to any specific epistemology. For example, it can be applied within both a constructivist and an essentialist research paradigm (ibid.: 78). It is also flexible in that it can be applied within different theoretical frameworks, or even in research projects in which no previous theory has been defined or identified (ibid.: 81).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 97), disadvantages of thematic analysis include that it "has limited interpretative power beyond mere description if it is not used within an existing theoretical framework that anchors the analytic claims that are made". The researcher has to be aware of this so as to not make claims that this type of analysis does not allow.

Even though the main theoretical framework (Christmann [2016b]) did not provide me with categories which I could apply in the analysis, I found thematic analysis suitable for this study because I knew of other, complementary theoretical accounts on spatial identity (Burgess 1985, Choudhary 2014), which anchored my analysis in theory.

5. Presentation and analysis of the findings

The analysis has shown that while the construction of the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt in the media in some respects reflects the identity dimensions suggested by Burgess (1985) and Choudhary (2014), there are also modifications of and additions to these dimensions in the data, which will be explained and demonstrated in the following. Among other things, the analysis of the data has revealed that in this present study, these dimensions should be regarded as connected. Also, there is some variation within these dimensions, which will be pointed out and discussed in the following as well.

The following figure provides an overview of the themes and sub-themes as they have been identified in the data:

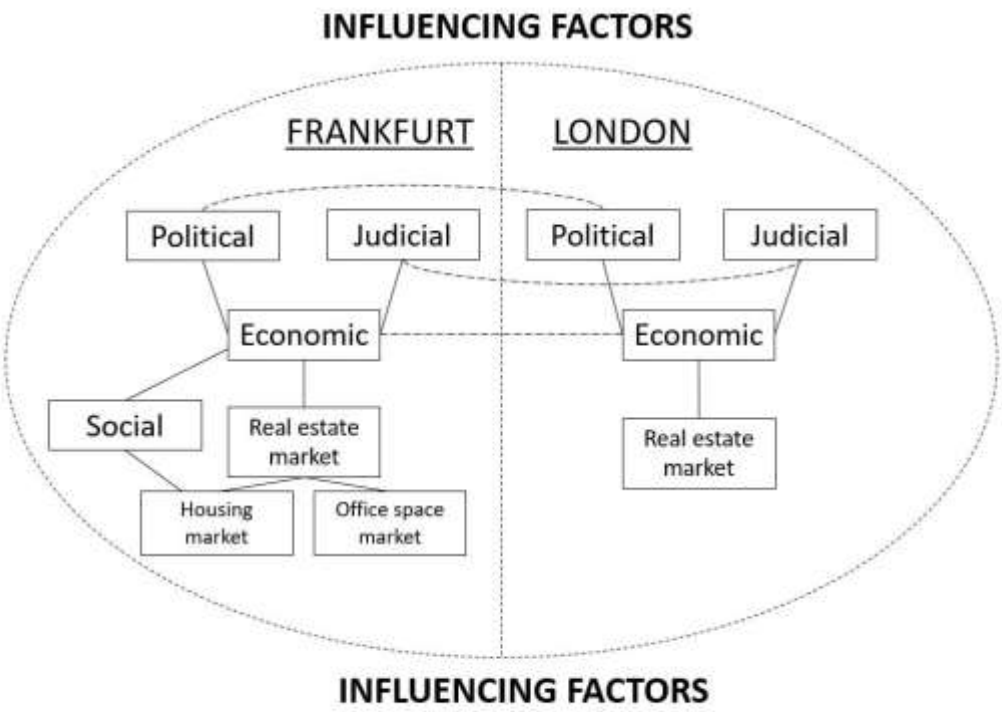

Figure 2: the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt as discussed in the media in the context of the relocation debate and Brexit (own illustration; dimensions partially based on Burgess 1985, Choudhary 2014)

On the Frankfurt side, four major themes relating to the city's future spatial identity have been identified: the economic dimension, the political dimension, the judicial dimension as well as the social dimension. Both the political, the judicial and the social dimension have been connected to the economic dimension in the data, which is why these themes are connected with a line. Beyond that, the economic dimension has a sub-theme: the real estate market, including the office space and housing market. The latter has also been connected to the social dimension, as will be discussed in the following.

On the London side, three themes have been identified: the economic dimension, the political dimension and the judicial dimension. The political and judicial dimensions have also been connected to the economic dimension of London's spatial identity, which is why these dimensions are joined by a line. A sub-theme of the economic dimension is London's real estate market, which has also been brought up in the discussion of its future spatial identity.

Because these different themes are connected, they will be discussed along the different axes to show their connectedness (e.g. social-economic axis, political-economic axis). Only the economic dimension will be discussed on its own initially because it is the focal theme to which the other dimensions on each side connect.

The analysis has also shown that the identity dimensions in these two cities are connected in this context. The potential inter-city relations are indicated through dotted lines. The vertical dotted line between the cities also indicates that the future spatial identities of these cities are not separate in the data set. In addition, influencing factors, among those factors relating to the current spatial identity of these cities, are made relevant in the data as well. Since these factors are argued to potentially have an influence on the future spatial identities in the data, they are represented in the figure as well, surrounding the dimensions. A dotted line has been drawn to indicate that these factors are not separate from the dimensions but that their influence 'diffuses' on the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt.

These themes and their sub-themes, if any, will be described and discussed below. A comparison between the spatial identity constructions in British and German media will also be made when relevant.

5.1 Economic dimension

A recurring category within the data are the economy-related aspects of Frankfurt and London, drawing attention to the economic dimensions of the cities' spatial identities (codes marked in three shades of green, cf. appendix F). Because of the repeated occurrence of this category, it has been assigned the status of a theme (cf. Ryan and Bernard 2003, quoted in Bryman 2012, 580). In the case of Frankfurt, this theme has one sub-theme, the real estate market (cf. codes marked in different shades of petrol blue), which consists of two aspects: the housing market and the office space market. The housing market also connects to the social dimension, as the figure above indicates. In the case of London, the economic theme has one sub-theme, the real estate market.

The different scenarios within this theme have been extracted from the analyzed newspaper articles for both cities, which will be discussed below, starting with Frankfurt.

5.1.1 Frankfurt

Different scenarios have been discussed in the media regarding Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity.

5.1.1.1 Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity

Scenario 1

One potential scenario discussed in the media is that Frankfurt may be a major beneficiary of Brexit with regard to economy-related aspects, which could potentially strengthen the city's economic spatial identity overall. For example, the city may attract jobs from London, especially within the financial services industry. Within this scenario, there is variation as to how many jobs may move to Frankfurt. Estimates vary between 5,000 (e.g. Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 18, code F2.5) and 87,667 jobs (e.g. The London Evening Standard, article 9, code L2.2.1), depending on if only jobs related to financial services are considered or all jobs potentially moving to Frankfurt, or the region in general. Many estimates lie in between, a recurring estimate being 10,000, which has been picked up by newspapers in both countries (e.g. The Guardian, article 3, code G3.5.1; The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.4; The Independent, article 15, code I4.6; Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 31, code SZ5.2). This number has proved persistent, reappearing throughout the negotiation period (cf. appendices B-E). According to a local representative from Frankfurt who is quoted in an article in Frankfurter Neue Presse, not only jobs from the financial services industry may relocate but also other companies such as IT firms (Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 18, code F2.6).

Connected to the potential number of jobs moving, some newspapers also bring up the increased tax income for the Frankfurt region, which thus may further forge the city's economic spatial identity, conveying that it may be (more) prosperous in the future. A recurring estimate in an optimistic scenario is that the Frankfurt metropolitan area may profit from an increased tax income of 191 million Euros, based on an estimate that 87,667 jobs might move to the region, including both financial and non-financial jobs. As the newspapers point out, this information is based on a report by Frankfurt Main Finance, the lobby group of the city's financial industry (e.g. The London Evening Standard, article 10, code L2.2; The Independent, article 15, code I5.2.1). It should be noted here that the article extract dealing with this topic in the different newspapers almost has the same wording; thus, it is likely that the information stems from a news agency or the like and has been adopted by the different newspapers.

Company assets more generally are predicted to move as well, from which Frankfurt would benefit in terms of its economy. For instance, article 3 in The Guardian highlights the potential relocation of companies and assets between London and Frankfurt due to Brexit:

> “London to lose (EURO) 800bn to Frankfurt as banks prepare for Brexit; Lobby group says up to 37 finance firms are relocating to Germany, taking assets with them.” (The Guardian, article 3, code G3.1)

Here, it is predicted that Frankfurt may gain with respect to economy-related aspects. While not stating it explicitly, this extract constructs Frankfurt’s economic spatial identity as potentially becoming stronger and more prosperous. In this example, evidence of the economic shifts is provided as well, with a reference to the number of banks that may move to Germany (code G3.1.1). The value of potential asset shifts has also been mentioned by other newspapers including The Independent (article 16, code I6.1), which may reinforce the portrayal of Frankfurt’s future economic identity as potentially strengthened. It is also here, for example, that it becomes clear that Frankfurt’s future spatial identity is closely connected to London’s; in other parts of the data, this interrelation becomes clear as well. This is why a dotted line has been drawn between the cities’ economic dimensions in the figure (cf. medium green code color in the code table).

This optimistic scenario has been taken a step further by an article in The Daily Telegraph. Referring to an appraisal by German bankers, the newspaper notes that Frankfurt’s power as financial center may become solidified in the context of Brexit:

> “Germany’s top bankers told a highlevel forum in Frankfurt that the city had already won the post-Brexit prize as Paris, Amsterdam and smaller financial hubs are mostly left with crumbs, consolidating its hegemonic position as the locus of the European Central Bank and the eurozone’s monetary machinery.” (The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.2/D1.2.1)

This extract constructs Frankfurt’s economic spatial identity as powerful, which may also have a political component (see also below). While this portrayal as such may be interpreted as positive for the city, signaling its strength and capability, this extract may also be read differently. Words such as “hegemonic” and “machinery” as well as the implicit downgrade of other European cities may construe Frankfurt as a ‘hostile robot’, thus possibly giving its future economic spatial identity a negative, threatening ring. Here, the communication can be argued to ascribe meaning to the information given, establishing Frankfurt's (potential increase in) power, which has been pointed out by Reichertz (2013, 51) as one of the tenets of communicative constructivism, as previously discussed.

This overall optimistic scenario has come up early in the media coverage of Frankfurt in the context of Brexit, despite the uncertainty that is associated with Brexit. For example, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (article 39) declared Frankfurt the „winner" of the Brexit-related competition for jobs, companies and assets already on June 24, 2016, only one day after the referendum took place. This 'winner-loser' approach to construct the future spatial identity of Frankfurt (and London and other competing financial centers) is also reflected in other articles, not only in German but also in some British newspapers. For example, The Daily Telegraph (article 7, code D1.1) writes that "Frankfurt defeats Paris in EU bank battle", construing Frankfurt as the winner, applying an economic, competition-oriented logic to the discussion of the cities' future. A similar approach is taken by The Independent (article 14), where it reads: "Frankfurt is winning the battle to lure companies from London in the run-up to Brexit" (code I4.3).

Scenario 2

Some articles are more cautious as regards future predictions relating to Frankfurt's economic spatial identity. For example, article 2 in The Guardian points to the factors on which the number of jobs relocating depends or is contingent:

> "How many jobs might come Frankfurt's way is dependent on how many banks decide to move, what percentage of their personnel they relocate, and whether the European Banking Authority (EBA) and the joint headquarters of the London Stock Exchange and Deutsche Börse – if their proposed fusion ever happens – end up being in Frankfurt, or other contending cities." (The Guardian, article 2, code G2.7/G2.7.1)

While this may generally represent a more cautious, modest construction of Frankfurt's economy-related spatial identity, this caution could also be explained by the fact that the article was published on July 18, 2016, only few weeks after the referendum, which may be the reason why this article proceeds cautiously, reflecting the uncertainty associated with the situation. A similarly cautious approach is reflected in an article by Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, published in October 2016 (article 42, code FAZ8.1.2).

Other articles predict that even though Frankfurt may be one of the cities profiting most from Brexit, it is most likely not the only one. An article in Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 34) predicts that the European financial markets are possibly going to be further fragmented in the future, with several different cities profiting and not one alone (e.g. code SZ8.3). According to the article, relocation decisions of companies will likely be increasingly based on where the market segment to be relocated is best developed (code SZ8.7.2), which represents another contingency on which the future of Frankfurt's (and other cities') economic spatial identity depends. Here, the article draws a more modest picture of Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity. But despite this more cautious approach, the article declares Frankfurt "one of the biggest Brexit winners" (code SZ8.9), displaying a similar economy-/competition-oriented way to construct the future economic spatial identity of Frankfurt. This also shows that the scenarios may somewhat overlap even within one article.

In addition, referring to an assessment by the local business development agency in Frankfurt, Frankfurter Neue Presse (article 17) points out that not all jobs relocating to Frankfurt will be filled with bankers coming from London but also with local hires, which may dampen the expectations as regards the influx of workers (codes F1.4/F1.4.1). It should be noted here that the article was published on July 14, 2018 (cf. appendix D), which may explain the more modest approach to the topic: By that time, some banks had already published their relocation plans (cf. code F1.4.2), which may be the reason why this scenario has a more modest, or maybe realistic, approach to the relocation question.

Scenario 3

Another construction, discussed by Frankfurter Neue Presse, is that even though Frankfurt may potentially attract 5,000 jobs, it might overall not benefit from Brexit-related newcomer influx due to impending downsizing in the financial industry in the city, "threatening 20,000 out of the current 60,000 banking jobs in Frankfurt", which is why Brexit-related job gains would only be a "weak consolation" (article 18, code F2.5/2.5.1). In this scenario, a relatively pessimistic stance is taken, presenting Frankfurt as potentially weakened in the future despite a Brexit-related influx of jobs. Again, it should be noted here that this article was published in on January 27, 2018. By that time, the situation with regard to potential relocations and the impending staff reduction had possibly become clearer (cf. code F2.4), which may explain this more conservative, or realistic, estimate.

Interim summary – Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity

Overall, while Frankfurt's economic spatial identity may be further developed and strengthened due to the move of jobs, companies and assets to the city, potentially becoming a 'power house' in the financial industry, this is not the only construction of the city's future economic spatial identity in the media. Some newspapers draw a more modest picture of the city's economic future, conveying that overall gains may be moderate, or even non-existent, be it because of an increasing fragmentation of markets or the downsizing in the local financial industry.

This can be argued to reflect what Christmann (2016b) means when she theorizes that multiple reconstructions of space may co-exist: As this analysis has shown, different constructions of Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity co-exist in the media, which compete against one another, with some newspapers construing Frankfurt as a major beneficiary (albeit with some variation), while others put any potential job gains into perspective. This has also been pointed out by Choudhary (2014), who puts forward that multiple identities may co-exist, which also seems to apply here with respect to this identity dimension. However, it should be noted that these different constructions are not mutually exclusive. There is also some overlap between these scenarios (cf. Christmann 2016b): All three of them expect there to be a relocation of jobs to the city, but they differ in how they evaluate this influx.

5.1.1.1.1 Frankfurt real estate market

A specific area which may be regarded as a part of Frankfurt's overall economic spatial identity is its real estate market, covering both the office space and the housing market. As the analysis has revealed, these topics are only brought up in relation to the potential job and company relocations to Frankfurt, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, which is why I have categorized it as a sub-theme of the economic dimension, at the same time a specific part of it and dependent on it in this context. While this sub-theme is rather specific in nature and is mainly derived from the economic theme, the housing market is also connected closely to the social dimension of Frankfurt's spatial identity, in some articles forming the transition from the economic to the social dimension, as will be discussed later.

Aspect 1: Housing market

The basic scenario discussed in relation to the housing market is that Brexit-related relocations, i.e. the influx of newcomers, will most likely increase the demand for housing space in Frankfurt, thus potentially leading to an increase in rents, which, in turn, could increase the overall pressure on the housing market. This line of argumentation can be found in several of the articles which were analyzed, both in British and German newspapers (e.g. The Independent, article 14, codes I4.4. – I4.4.2, Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 20, codes F4.4 – F4.4.3). Some articles have specified this, predicting a lack of housing space in Frankfurt (e.g. Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 28, code SZ2.5.2, Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 21, code F5.1). This topic has come up early in the discussion of the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt: For example, the articles in Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Neue Presse (article 20) were published on June 29, 2016. It has been brought up again repeatedly over the negotiation period (e.g. Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 18).

Aspect 2: Office space market

In the newspapers analyzed, there is ambivalence regarding this aspect of Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity. For example, while some articles note an increasing Brexit-related interest in office space in Frankfurt, predicting sufficient supply (e.g. Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 28, code SZ2.5.1), others note that while there is overall sufficient availability in office space, there is a lack in *suitable, high-quality* office space in the area most in demand: the city center (Frankfurter Neue Presse, article

24, codes F8.1, F8.5-F8.5.1.1, F8.6). Thus, there are different constructions of the future situation on the office space market. Due to this ambivalence, the effects on Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity are difficult to predict in this respect.

5.1.2 London

Different scenarios have been discussed in relation to the future economic spatial identity of London.

5.1.2.1 London's future economic spatial identity

Scenario 1

Some of the newspapers analyzed have constructed London's future economic spatial identity as potentially weakened due to Brexit, with the city losing both jobs, assets and possibly entire industries in the process.

Estimates with regard to how many jobs may be relocated from the city vary from 5,000 to 200,000, with other, varying estimates within this range (e.g. The Guardian, article 3, code G3.5.2; The Times, article 5, code T1.2.1). In an article in The Guardian, the job loss has been associated with a loss in income of 1.8tn Euro based on the estimate that 30,000 workers leave London (The Guardian, article 1, code T1.8.1). Other articles have pointed to the asset volume that may be shifted from London to Frankfurt, amounting to 800 billion Euros (e.g. The Guardian, article 3, code G3.3.2). These factors may influence London's future economic spatial identity, possibly diminishing its future economic strength.

An economy-related aspect which has also come up in this future-related discussion is the clearing industry. Different scenarios have been discussed with respect to this branch of the finance industry. For example, according to an estimate by the CEO of London Stock Exchange at the time, if clearing was relocated from London to continental Europe, the city might lose 200,000 jobs (The Times, article 5, code T1.2.1) and a large volume of business amounting to billions of Euros (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 27, code SZ1.3). The article in Süddeutsche Zeitung (ibid.) puts this potential relocation in a broader perspective, relating it to London's overall future role:

> "Euro clearing is an important part of the question regarding what role the City of London can – and may - play on the European financial market after Brexit." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 27, code SZ1.3; own translation)

Thus, if this branch is relocated from London to continental Europe, London's future role in the European financial industry may be diminished, thus weakening its economic spatial identity overall.

It has also been discussed that London's attractiveness for founders and qualified personnel from other EU countries may suffer from Brexit (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 30, codes SZ4.1, SZ4.4), which could overall impede growth in the city and, hence, weaken its future economic spatial identity. This may, however, be alleviated by other location advantages, which will be discussed more in depth below under “influencing factors”.

In relation to London’s future economic spatial identity, some articles linguistically underline the scenarios they construct for this dimension of London’s spatial identity. For example, in some British articles, a victim role is constructed for London. Article 1 in The Guardian states that European cities have set out to “steal ‘low-hanging fruit’” from London (code G1.1), which implies that London may be a victim here: a victim of theft. This may, then, also relate to Frankfurt: By implication, the European cities seeking to benefit from Brexit are constructed as thieves. Other articles suggest that London may be on the receiving end of a war-like attack. The Times (article 6), referring to a warning from Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer, writes that the financial sector needs “to brace for a Frenchled attempt to bind the City in regulation and hobble London’s growth” (code T2.4). Other articles report more neutrally on the impending job losses (e.g. The Independent, article 12, code I2.1).

Scenario 2

While some articles may convey the impression that the economic impact of Brexit will be significant for London, other articles put these economic shifts in a broader perspective. For instance, Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 31, code SZ5.2; own translation) writes:

> “PWC and Boston Consult reckon that 80,000 to 100,000 bankers will leave London. Considering that there are 700,000 [banking] jobs in London, this may not be significant.” (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 31, code SZ5.2)

Here, the article indicates that the total number of job losses in London may amount to 100,000, but it also says that this number may not carry much weight if seen in relation to the total number of financial-services jobs in London. This may alleviate the impression that London’s (or the City of London’s) future economic spatial identity will be weakened post-Brexit, bearing notable damage.

With regard to clearing, different, less extensive scenarios than the one described above have been discussed as well, which may also alleviate the impact of Brexit on London’s economic spatial identity. For example, it has been suggested that clearing may stay in London if the UK and the EU agree that the EU may acquire free insight into the clearing-related activities in the event of a financial crisis (Die Welt, article 25, code W1.3.1). Thus, this scenario has a political component as well, since it is contingent on a specific agreement between the UK and the EU. If London retained the clearing business, the impact of Brexit on its economic spatial identity may be contained to some degree, which would thus maintain the status quo in this area. It should be noted here that shortly before the former Brexit deadline, March 29, 2019, London’s clearing activities were recognized by the EU for the potential implementation period, which has averted this potential threat to London’s economic spatial identity for the time being. The article describing this recognition points out that it saves jobs and this financially valuable business, overall "[underpinning] London's overall dominance in the clearing business" (The Independent, article 11, codes I1.1 – I1.1.3).

In addition, as indicated above, there may be a fragmentation of European financial markets post-Brexit, with financial activities spread across the continent according to market segment (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 34, e.g. code SZ8.3). According to an article in The Daily Telegraph, this may lessen the negative effects on London's economic situation post-Brexit and confine the potential impending job losses. Referring to a report by a consultancy firm, the article reads:

> "[…] financial job losses could perhaps be confined to between 35,000 and 40,000, so long as the exodus was scattered around the eurozone. […] "Should a new EU hub emerge, banks would be quick to reorient their operations towards that location." (The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.8)

Thus, the potentially increasing fragmentation of the financial markets may contribute to limit the negative impact of Brexit on London, hence to some degree confining the weakening of its economic spatial identity.

This scenario has also been reflected linguistically in some articles. The Times (article 6), for example, referring to a statement by City lobbyist Miles Celic, implies that London has a "genuine ecosystem" and should be regarded "an organism" that is unlikely or even impossible to be imitated by other EU hubs (code T2.2.1). This implies that the losses London may suffer may be confined because of its specific conditions.

Interim summary: London's future economic spatial identity

Overall, these scenarios show that different possible constructions of London's future economic spatial identity co-exist in the media, as in the case of Frankfurt (cf. Christmann 2016b). While one scenario accentuates the economic losses London will suffer in the context of Brexit, others put these losses in a broader perspective, concluding that the potential negative effects on London's economic spatial identity may be contained to some degree, overall not impacting its economic spatial identity as much as the other scenario suggests. As in the case of Frankfurt, these scenarios are not mutually exclusive: There is some overlap between these scenarios as well (cf. ibid.), with both predicting that business, jobs and assets will move, but they classify the impact differently, as described above.

5.1.2.1.1 London real estate market

A sub-theme which is connected to the economic dimension of London's future economic spatial identity is its real estate market, for which two scenarios have been discussed.

Scenario 1: Stagnation or decline of London real estate market

This scenario suggests that Brexit may entail negative effects for the London real estate market. There may be a Brexit-induced stagnation on the city's real estate market, with an increasing number of vacancies, a decreasing number of affluent potential buyers and a potential loss in value of real estate objects (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 28, codes SZ2.3-SZ2.3.3.1). Other articles predict a weakening of the London real estate market, including a potential decline in value on its office space market (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 37, codes FAZ3.3, FAZ 3.3.1). Overall, these developments could be argued to also have an effect on London's overall future economic spatial identity. However, the different constructions in the articles do not allow to make inferences about the exact impact of this stagnation or weakening of the real estate market on London's overall economic future.

Scenario 2: Maintenance of the status quo

Other articles predict that the London real estate market will not suffer from Brexit but might also benefit from it to some degree. For example, a real estate professional quoted in The London Evening Standard (article 8) suggests that property prices may not be impacted by Brexit because it is "such a large and international city" (code L1.9.1.1). An article in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (article 37) puts forward that the London real estate market may be stable, with Brexit even suggested as a potential catalyst for real estate purchase decisions (codes FAZ3.1, FAZ 3.1.2). Overall, this paints a more optimistic picture of London's future economic spatial identity with respect to the real estate industry, implying that the overall dimension of its spatial identity does not necessarily have to be affected negatively in all respects.

5.2 Social-economic axis

5.2.1 Frankfurt

Several scenarios have been discussed with regard to the social dimension of Frankfurt's future spatial identity (cf. turquoise code color). Since the economic and social dimensions are connected, I have referred to this sub-chapter as the 'social-economic axis' rather than the 'social dimension' more generally to be able to show the interconnectedness. In the following, scenarios relating to this dimension will be discussed, which concern three different aspects of Frankfurt's future social spatial identity.

Aspect 1: Potential marginalization of local residents

As aspect relating to the social dimension that has come up in the media is that there may be a marginalization of local residents in Frankfurt, caused by the influx of workers from the UK. That is, there is a connection to the city's economic spatial identity. This marginalization is discussed to be relevant for both the housing market and the school market.

For example, Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 28) constructs the job relocations from London to Frankfurt as challenging for the social dimension of the city's future spatial identity. The article puts forward that there may be a potential gentrification of quarters, a marginalization of local residents on the housing market as well as an increasing competition for kindergarten and school spots (codes SZ2.5; SZ2.5.3, SZ2.5.4, SZ2.5.5, SZ2.5.6). Thus, Frankfurt's future social spatial identity may be affected by Brexit, with its local residents possibly suffering negative effects from the Brexit-related influx of workers. But as the article also points out, this scenario is contingent on the actual number of workers relocating to the city, which, in turn, is also influenced on the outcome of the competition between EU cities (codes SZ2.5.1-6, SZ2.5.1-6.1).

Scenario 1.1: Potential marginalization of local residents on the housing market

The potential marginalization of local residents on the housing market has been brought up by Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 32), which suggests that local residents in Frankfurt, especially those with lower levels of income who cannot afford the potentially rising rents on the city's housing market, may leave the city and move to the surrounding regions. This constructs the city's future social spatial identity, in relation to its residents, as challenged. The marginalization and potential migration of local residents, in particular those with lower incomes, may thus also change the composition of the local population, affecting the social dimension of the city's future spatial identity. This aspect has been picked up by Süddeutsche Zeitung as well, which states that the Brexit-related influx of workers may become an issue for Frankfurt "if the city becomes a center for the rich" (article 33, code SZ7.5.2; own translation). In a similar context, Frankfurter Neue Presse has also described Brexit as a double-edged sword, positive for business people, negative for local residents without top level salaries (article 18, codes F2.10, F2.10.1, F2.11-2.11.2). As pointed out by Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 31, however, the increasing prices on the housing market may be construed as positive for real estate professionals as well (code SZ5.6.1, SZ5.6.1.1).

Scenario 1.2: Potential marginalization of local residents on the school market

The potential marginalization of local residents on the school market has also been discussed by Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (article 35), which points out that "parents, homebuyers and tenants have to prepare for a tougher distribution battle" with regard to school spots, which is explained to be caused by the impending influx of bankers to the city (code FAZ1.1, FAZ1.1.1; own translation).

It should be noted here that the situation with regard to schools has also been discussed more neutrally by some articles, which state that there has been a rising interest and demand in international schools in Frankfurt, related to Brexit (e.g. Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 17, codes F1.2, F1.2.1). This rising interest has been construed both as evidence for Frankfurt's popularity as a relocation destination as well as a precursor of future relocations to the city (e.g. The Independent, article 13, codes I3.2, I3.2.1;

I3.6). Hence, it is closely connected to the economic dimension of the city's economic identity as well. In relation to how the school situation is constructed, it may be interesting to note that all articles which construct the school situation as potentially problematic have been published in German newspapers (see also Die Tageszeitung, article 26, codeTAZ1.4.6). However, this may not be surprising given that the school situation and its impact on local residents is a topic with particularly local relevance.

Aspect 2: Social fabric and social identity of local residents

Another aspect, which is partially associated with the first aspect as well, relates to the future social fabric and the social identity of the city's local residents. Several potential scenarios have been discussed within this aspect.

Scenario 1

For example, The Guardian (article 2) has raised the question of how the local identity of the city ("the city's rather cosy, almost village-like identity compared to London", code G2.12) will be affected by the relocating bankers, implying that it may be at risk from a potential influx of newcomers from London. Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 33) suggests a similar scenario. Quoting a German-French politician, the article reads:

> ""That there are 30 percent migrants in Frankfurt and that 80 percent of all citizens feel comfortable here is fascinating for me, it makes Frankfurt attractive for me," he says. [According to him], Frankfurt has kept an interesting mix of people. But now this equilibrium is at risk. Due to the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU, thousands of bankers will move to the metropolis on the Main. "The city center will become unaffordable because prices will rise. Frankfurt will then not be multicultural anymore in terms of its social composition, Brexit could wash away the fascination of the city." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 33, code SZ7.1; own translation)

Here, Frankfurt's present social spatial identity is constructed as multicultural, characterized by diversity and a peaceful togetherness of cultures and different people. This, however, will potentially change, according to the interviewee: He constructs Brexit and the Brexit-related influx of workers as a potential disturbance factor, threatening the city's social equilibrium, possibly turning Frankfurt into a city of bankers, making it less multicultural in terms of its social composition. Here, a relation to aspect 1 can be identified as well. By describing the influx of workers as potentially "washing away the fascination of the city", the German-French politician quoted here also implies that from his point of view, any Brexit-related changes to the social fabric of the city might be rather negative, damaging the social identity.

Scenario 2

While these accounts construct Frankfurt's future social spatial identity as potentially changing or even endangering its social fabric, both articles also put this into perspective. For instance, the article in Süddeutsche Zeitung suggests that the (potentially negative) impact on the social fabric of the city may be contained by the open-mindedness and liberal attitude of Frankfurters. According to the article, this, however, depends on if the city remains a city for all residents, and not one only for the rich (SZ7.5.1). Here, an overlap with aspect 1 can be recognized as well.

The article in The Guardian similarly presents potential counter-evidence of changes to the future social spatial identity of the city. According to one of the editors of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, quoted in the article, the social fabric and local identity of Frankfurt residents is unlikely to change due to Brexit because "Frankfurters are [sic] self confident enough to tolerate the bankers and not let themselves be intimidated by them or their wealth and the banking scene does not dictate the terms of life in the city" (The Guardian, article 2, code G2.12.1).

To conclude, different constructions as regards the future social spatial identity of Frankfurt in relation to the Brexit-related influx of workers co-exist, with some assessing it as remaining steady while others predict potential (negative) change (cf. Christmann 2016b). It is interesting here to see that both articles discussed above 'think' in scenarios as well, illuminating different possible scenarios as regards the future social fabric and social identity of local residents, which may also reflect the uncertainty associated with Brexit.

Aspect 3: Increase in Japanese population group

Brexit may also lead to an increase in specific population groups, as discussed by article 22 in Frankfurter Neue Presse. As the newspaper states, there has been an increasing influx of Japanese people to the city, which has been associated with the relocation of Japanese banks to Frankfurt (code F6.1, F6.1.1). This article also suggests that there may a reciprocal relationship between the economic and social dimensions of the city with regard to this population group: While the relocation of banks has led to an increasing Japanese population in the city, this exact population group including the infrastructure for its community (e.g. school, kindergarten) may be seen as a reason why companies from this culture move to the city (code F6.2).

Interim summary: Frankfurt's future social spatial identity

Overall, several aspects and scenarios have been discussed in relation to Frankfurt's future social spatial identity. For example, the potential marginalization of local residents on the housing and school markets has been put forward, and the future social fabric and social identity of local residents has also been picked up by the media in relation to different possible scenarios. While some constructions take a more neutral stance, others are more pessimistic, predicting there may be negative changes to Frankfurt's future social spatial identity. Others, again, evaluate several possible scenarios, providing a more balanced, nuanced view of the possible changes to Frankfurt's social spatial identity. These different constructions, even within individual articles, may be argued to reflect the uncertainty that is associated with Brexit, with the concrete effects unforeseeable.

5.3 Political-economic axis

Not only the economic dimension of Frankfurt's and London's spatial identities has been discussed by the media; the political dimension of their identities has been picked up as well (cf. codes in different shades of blue, appendix F). This political debate has revolved around two focal topics: the future location of the EU institutions EBA and EMA (European Banking Authority, European Medicines Agency), and the power implications of Brexit as such in relation to these cities. This dimension is closely connected to the economic dimension as well, which has already been touched upon above (cf. Frankfurt's "hegemonic position as the locus of the European Central Bank […]", The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.2.1). Due to this connection, this sub-chapter has been named 'political-economic axis', describing the relationship between the two dimensions.

5.3.1 Frankfurt

As indicated above, an aspect which is affected by Brexit are the EU institutions that are, or rather were, based in London. Their future has been decided on by now: The European Banking Authority (EBA) will move to Paris, France, while the European Medicines Agency (EMA) will move to Amsterdam in the Netherlands (European Council/Council of the European Union, n.d. [b]). Before the decision on November 20, 2017, though, the future of these agencies was discussed in the media, with Frankfurt named as a potential relocation destination for these agencies. For example, Frankfurter Neue Presse (article 23) has named Frankfurt as one of the applicants for both agencies (code F7.2). This article makes a connection to the potential economic gains a move of these agencies would entail; for example, in the case of EMA, 900 jobs would relocate (F7.2.1), and associated industries and groups (e.g. scientific institutes, lobbyists) could move as well (code 7.2.2), which would lead to a boost for the local economy and innovation in Frankfurt (code 7.2.2.1). Here, the article makes explicit that a relocation of the political agencies could also benefit the economic dimension of Frankfurt's spatial identity, seeing them as closely related (codes F7.2-F7.2.2.1). A similar line of argumentation can be found at the end of this article, which mentions Frankfurt as one of the contestants for EBA, which employs 170 workers (codes F7.4-F7.4.1). The potential economic ramifications of a move of EBA to Frankfurt are also taken up by Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (article 41), which reads as follows:

> “Whatever city attracts EBA will also enhance its attractiveness for banks in London which are ready to relocate.” (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 41, codes FAZ7.2/FAZ7.2.1)

The potential relocation of EBA to Frankfurt could thus have an effect on its overall attractiveness as a financial hub, potentially increasing the number of banks deciding to relocate there. The political dimension can thus be argued to also potentially shape the future economic spatial identity of Frankfurt. However, this article also presents some factors on which the relocation of EBA to Frankfurt, and thus the relocation of more banks to the city, is contingent. For example, it states that it depends on how EU ministers vote on the future location of EBA, which is potentially influenced by political deals between EU member states (codes FAZ7.1.1/FAZ7.1.2). Also, the relocation of EBA is contingent on the relocation of EMA, since not both agencies can go to the same country. Thus, if EMA, as discussed in this article, relocates to Bonn, Frankfurt will not be further considered in the competition for EBA (code FAZ7.2.2). Thus, Frankfurt’s future political but also economic spatial identities are contingent on several factors in this respect.

While these articles make a connection to the potential economic implications of the relocation of these agencies to Frankfurt, an article in Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 29) relates this more explicitly to the potential power implications of such a move, which, again, are also connected to the economic dimension of Frankfurt’s spatial identity. The article, referring to France’s stance towards the potential relocation of EBA to Frankfurt, reads:

> “France fears that the financial centre could become too powerful if more and more institutions settle there.” (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 29, code SZ3.4.3; own translation)

This excerpt shows that the relocation of EU institutions may have power implications creating an imbalance between Frankfurt and other EU cities; a potential relocation of EBA to Frankfurt could thus strengthen Frankfurt’s political and economic spatial identities at the same time, potentially increasing its power on financial markets. However, whether this construction of Frankfurt’s future political and economic spatial identity is regarded as positive or negative may depend on what viewpoint is taken. While stakeholders in Frankfurt may perceive this scenario in a positive way, it may also be construed as negative and potentially threatening, for example from the perspective of stakeholders in other European financial hubs.

The relationship between the political and economic dimensions also goes the other way, if “political” is more broadly understood as “power-related”: The economic gains that Frankfurt may benefit from in the context of Brexit could increase its overall power, for example “consolidating its hegemonic position as the locus of the European Central Bank and the eurozone's monetary machinery", as already indicated above (The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.2.1). Thus, the construction of Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity may have political implications as well, giving it more power overall. The power, or more broadly the political, implications of Frankfurt's potentially strengthened future economic spatial identity are also related to the country level in this article. Here, Frankfurt's potential economic success is construed as "a triumph that threatens to entrench German hegemony and profoundly upset the internal balance of the EU system" (code D1.1.1). Thus, the potential changes in Frankfurt's future economic spatial identity may have implications for Germany as well, consolidating its powerful position in Europe, possibly creating an imbalance between EU member states.

It should be noted here that it could be argued that power implications weave through the entire data set, implicit in many of the constructions of Frankfurt's future spatial identity (cf. its declaration as winner, see above). However, only some articles make power-related aspects of Frankfurt's future spatial identity explicit, as discussed above.

Interim summary: Frankfurt

In the articles that were analyzed, Frankfurt has been discussed as a potential relocation destination for the EU agencies EBA and EMA, in particular EBA. It was suggested that the relocation of these EU agencies including, for example, jobs and surrounding industries could have implications for the city's future economic spatial identity as well. In the case of EBA, Frankfurt's position as financial hub could be strengthened, potentially increasing its power on financial markets. Its potentially increasing economic strength as such stemming from job and asset relocations has also been discussed as possibly consolidating its power as financial center overall, which paints an optimistic picture of Frankfurt's future economic and political spatial identity. This discussion overall indicates that the political, power-related and economic dimensions may be closely interwoven, with one potentially affecting the other.

5.3.2 London

While it could be, again, argued that the economy-related discussion of London's future spatial identity also has a political/power-related component (e.g. London's future role on financial markets, with regard to clearing, etc., see above), the discussion of its future political spatial identity was confined to its mentioning as the city from which EBA and EMA have to relocate, with the implicit economic consequences discussed in connection with Frankfurt above (e.g. job relocation, industry relocation). The economic implications of these moves, in turn, could be argued to impact London's future economic spatial identity as well, possibly weakening it overall (cf. Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 23, codes F7.2-F7.2.2).

That only few articles touch upon this dimension in relation to London could be explained by the fact that one of the search criteria in the article search was that the names of both cities had to appear in the text – thus, all articles only mentioning London, not Frankfurt, were excluded. However, it could be that these articles, i.e. those solely focusing on London, discuss the political dimension of its future identity. This lack of data as regards London's future political identity should thus not be interpreted as if this aspect of its spatial identity does not come up in the media or remains untouched by Brexit. It may simply not have come up much in the specific context of the relocation discussion raised by Brexit, which are the point of departure of this study. This may also be true of the social dimension.

5.4 Judicial-economic axis

This theme has come up in one article in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (article 40, cf. brown code colors, appendix F). Despite its occurrence in only one article, I found the judicial dimension to be a theme in itself because it represents another area which may be affected by Brexit in London and Frankfurt. As can be seen in the following, this theme is also connected to the economic dimensions of these cities' spatial identities, hence the name of this sub-chapter 'judicial-economic axis'.

5.4.1 Frankfurt

The scenario discussed in relation to the judicial dimension is that commercial courts currently based in London may move to Frankfurt in the context of Brexit, from which Frankfurt-based commercial courts may profit. This may especially concern matters relating to finance and trade. In the article, this scenario is connected to the economic dimension as well: If the city is able to attract the commercial court, the city's financial industry may profit as well, overall enhancing its attractiveness as financial hub. However, this scenario is contingent on Frankfurt's ability to build a well-versed court in the city that is familiar with English financial markets law (codes FAZ6.1-FAZ6.1.1.1.2). Thus, overall, Frankfurt's future spatial identity with respect to the judicial dimension may profit from Brexit, which may also strengthen its economic dimension by making it more attractive as a financial center.

5.4.2 London

This scenario has also been related to London. Because of Brexit, the commercial courts in the city may move to continental Europe because of the UK's potential loss of access to and involvement in judicial cooperation in the EU. This may also have implications for the importance of London-based commercial courts post-Brexit:

> "The UK's exit from the EU challenges the dominance of British courts with respect to European financial transactions." (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 40, code FAZ6.1)

As can be seen here, this scenario may have an implicit political, power-related component as well, calling into question the future role of British courts, thus constructing London's future judicial spatial identity as less dominant, or powerful, than previously. This dimension thus also has a power-related component. By implication, London's future economic spatial identity may be affected here as well if financial companies decide to relocate to, for example, Frankfurt, if Frankfurt is able to attract the commercial court (ibid.).

5.5 Influencing factors

As the analysis has shown, it is in many instances not only the future spatial identities of Frankfurt and London themselves that are made relevant and discussed in the articles but their present as well, which indicates that the present may in some way have an influence on or is the point of departure for the future spatial identities of these cities. Subsumed under the overarching theme "influencing factors", three sub-themes have been identified: location advantages, location disadvantages as well as the sub-theme "uncertainty". In the color-coded code table, these sub-themes are marked in different shades of yellow (location advantages), red (location disadvantages) and grey (uncertainty), cf. appendix F.

Even though this overall theme including its sub-themes weaves through the entire data set and is closely connected to the other themes, as can be seen in the following, I have decided to present it separately because it itself represents a pattern in the data.

5.5.1 Frankfurt

5.5.1.1 Location advantages

Aspects of Frankfurt's present spatial identity, here referred to as location advantages, were made relevant in the media, construed as potentially facilitating future developments in the city.

For example, factors relating to the economic dimension of Frankfurt's spatial identity are put forward as potentially facilitating the relocation of banks to and thus further economic developments in Frankfurt. Article 2 in The Guardian (code G2.4) suggests that Frankfurt may be one of the cities benefiting most from Brexit-related relocations, naming factors that could encourage companies from the financial sector to relocate to Frankfurt:

> "Frankfurt - already home to the European Central Bank, the EU's insurance regulator, as well as almost 200 foreign banks – is likely to be a major beneficiary of the post-Brexit fallout in the financial sector." (The Guardian, article 2, code G2.4)

Here, the information on the benefits of Frankfurt as a relocation destination (code 2.4.1) is embedded into the prediction of the potential economic gains in Frankfurt, which implies that the present, i.e. the above-mentioned factors, may be relevant for the future as well, potentially contributing to or shaping the economic dimension of the city's future spatial identity.

Other articles highlight Frankfurt's status quo as regards its position within the finance industry. For example, it is mentioned that it is the financial center of the eurozone (article 20, code F4.12) and an established banking location (e.g. article 24, code F8.2.1). This is also highlighted in an article published by The Daily Telegraph, which, after a brief introductory sentence, quotes John Cryan, former chief executive of Deutsche Bank:

> "A major financial centre requires a complex eco-system and the right mix of taxes, regulation and market breadth. "There is only one European city that can fulfil these requirements and that city is Frankfurt."" (The Daily Telegraph/John Cryan, article 7, code D1.5.1)

In one article, the mayor of Frankfurt is quoted as well, pointing to the high availability of office space, which may also be a factor for banks when they choose where to relocate, thus potentially shaping the economic side of Frankfurt's future spatial identity if banks, indeed, decide to relocate there (The Guardian, article 2, code G2.6).

The topic of office space is also taken up by Professor Hellmich of the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, who is quoted in the same article as Mayor Feldmann. For example, Hellmich holds that the relatively low rents in Frankfurt may benefit the city, especially given that many banks nowadays follow a policy of savings:

> "[…] manageable rental costs at a time when banks are having to look closer at their bottom lines, certainly makes Frankfurt very appealing." (The Guardian, article 2, code G2.17)

Here, Frankfurt's benefit, the relatively low rents, is presented not only as an advantage of the city itself but also portrayed as positively contributing to the bottom line of the potentially relocating banks. Thus, the low rents are presented as a strategic benefit for banks, which may make Frankfurt attractive as a relocation destination, thus also potentially shaping its economic spatial identity if banks decide to relocate there. Especially with regard to property and rent prices, some articles explicitly compare Frankfurt and London, highlighting Frankfurt's location benefits due to its comparatively low rents (e.g. article 2, code G2.16.1; article 24, F8.3).

Other factors which are mentioned as potentially benefiting relocation to Frankfurt, thus potentially shaping its economic spatial identity, relate to the city's location and infrastructure. For example, recurring factors mentioned as benefits are its airport (e.g. article 18, code F2.7.1; article 24, code F8.4;

article 31, code SZ5.5), its general infrastructure and transportation links (e.g. article 2, codes G2.14, G2.16.1; article 31, code SZ5.5) and its central location in Europe (e.g. article 2, code G2.16.1; article 31, code SZ5.11). Additional factors presented as location advantages for Frankfurt include its relatively extensive cultural offer compared to other German cities, as pointed out by the city's mayor (article 2, code G2.6), its high standard of living, according to Eric Menges, leader of the location marketing office FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH (article 2, code G2.8), and its quality of life, including the short distances within the city and the ability to cycle to work, as pointed out by a Deutsche Bank manager (e.g. article 33, codes SZ7.2, SZ7.4).

Social factors may also play a role when it comes to attracting companies and workers to a city such as Frankfurt, which, in turn, may shape its economic, and social, identity. For example, the availability of international schools and kindergartens as well as low tuition fees may be regarded as a location advantage potentially attracting bankers. This has, for example, been brought up by The Independent (article 3, code I3.11) and Frankfurter Neue Presse (article 17, code F1.3.1). In the case of Frankfurter Neue Presse, this aspect is explicitly presented as having an influence on a city's competitiveness and its quality of life (article 17, codes F1.3.1, F1.3.1.1), which emphasizes the role these factors may play in attracting companies and workers.

The availability of schooling options and other offers targeting certain cultural groups may also enhance the attractiveness of a city in the eyes of people from this cultural background, benefiting relocation to that city. In the case of Frankfurt, the large Japanese community as well as offers such as a Japanese school and kindergarten as well as Japanese restaurants have been discussed as factors which have led to an increased settlement of Japanese banks in the city (article 22, code F6.2), thus contributing to and shaping Frankfurt's economic, and also social including cultural, spatial identity. This highlights that the different identity dimensions are interconnected, and factors affecting one dimension may also influence other dimensions.

But it is not only the economic and social dimensions of Frankfurt's spatial identity which may potentially be shaped by its location advantages. For example, an article in Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 29, code SZ3.4.4) accentuates that Frankfurt's relatively low rents as well as the availability of suitable real estate objects in the city center may help to attract the European Banking Authority (EBA) to Frankfurt, which, if it relocates, could be argued to strengthen Frankfurt's political (and economic) status. As already mentioned earlier, the political and the economic dimensions of Frankfurt's spatial identity may be closely interrelated: If EBA moves to Frankfurt, the institution may attract financial companies as well, i.e. lead to additional economic benefits. Thus, by implication, if Frankfurt's location benefits contribute to attracting EBA, they may also shape the political and economic dimensions of its spatial identity (see above).

A recurring topic are also the local initiatives which have been formed to support Frankfurt in attracting companies and workers. Because of their location marketing efforts, they may also be counted as facilitating factors. For example, Die Tageszeitung (article 26) mentions regional marketing efforts in Frankfurt, which, for example, have set up a 24-hour hotline and published an English-language magazine to persuade workers from London to move to Frankfurt (code TAZ1.1.1). Among others, it is in this context that potential *barriers or impediments* to moving to Frankfurt come up and are discussed. For example, Die Tageszeitung describes that the regional marketing efforts explicitly address aspects that are often perceived as disadvantages of Frankfurt and Germany, thus, by doing so, eliminating potential prejudices that bankers in London may have (code TAZ1.2.1.1.1). This, overall, may then facilitate relocation to Frankfurt, which may further shape its spatial identity. Here it becomes clear that potential benefits and barriers to relocation can also be interrelated: Potentially facilitating factors such as location marketing efforts may come into being *because* of potential barriers existing.

This also becomes clear when looking at German labor law and taxes. While these aspects may be regarded a barrier to relocation (cf. article 2, code G2.18; article 3, code G3.6; see also below), there are efforts on the national level to remove these potential obstacles, which may, then, *benefit* Frankfurt. For example, article 3 in The Guardian (code 3.6) puts forward the following:

> "This month Germany moved one step closer to loosening its labour laws, which have been seen as a hurdle in attracting a larger number of banking jobs." (The Guardian, article 3, code G3.6)

Here it is explicitly stated that the labor laws may be a barrier to relocation, but this information is connected to efforts by the German government to *loosen* these laws and create a more business-friendly environment. This brief analysis shows that the local/regional and the national levels cannot be clearly separated, either.

5.5.1.2 Location disadvantages

As the previous discussion has shown, location factors facilitating and impeding potential relocation may be closely interrelated, for example with regard to Germany's labor laws and taxation and its overall business environment. These may be seen as a barrier (e.g. article 1, code G1.1.1; article 2, code G2.18; article 3, code G3.6; article 30, code SZ4.5.1), but according to the newspapers, efforts have been made to address these factors and remove potential prejudices that may exist about them, thus potentially facilitating relocation (e.g. article 1, code G1.2.1; article 3, code G3.6).

Some aspects mentioned as location factors facilitating relocation have also been discussed as potential barriers, which signals that there is some disagreement on the status of Frankfurt's current spatial identity, i.e. whether it has a promising starting point or not. For example, while the infrastructure, for example with respect to international schools and kindergartens, is by some articles presented as having sufficient capacities (e.g. article 17, code F1.3.1), an article by Süddeutsche Zeitung quotes John Cryan, who says that the infrastructure is “bad”, calling, in particular, for more international schools (article 33, code SZ7.3). That a lack of school spots can be a potential barrier to relocation is also pointed out by article 13 in The Independent (code I3.7). Also, it seems to be subject to debate whether Frankfurt has sufficient availabilities with respect to office space, as indicated above. While Mayor Feldmann points out that there is plenty of office space available (article 2, code G2.6), an article in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (article 42) says that there is a lack of office space in the city center, which is the location in the city most in demand. According to this article, an influx of banks and bankers would thus be “difficult to handle” for the office space market in relevant locations, potentially representing a barrier for companies seeking to relocate (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 42, code FAZ8.1.5.1.2; own translation).

Another factor potentially impeding relocation to Frankfurt which has come up in several articles is Frankfurt’s general image and reputation (e.g. article 2, code G2.18; article 17, code F1.7; article 18, F2.3.1). As the article in Frankfurter Neue Presse (article 18, code F2.3.1) reads:

> “The location marketing agency FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH confirms that many bankers who love the atmosphere of the world metropolis London are not overly excited to move to Frankfurt: “They find our city to be provincial.”” (Frankfurter Neue Presse, article 18, code F2.3.1; own translation)

Here, Frankfurt’s image is described as “provincial”, reportedly lacking appeal from the viewpoint of many bankers, especially compared to London. While it is not explicitly stated above, this may potentially be a location factor impeding future developments in Frankfurt if companies or bankers reject the city because of its image.

Another factor which seems to play a role in this context is the competition between the EU cities, and between Frankfurt and non-European financial centers such as Singapore and New York, with regard to attracting business in the context of Brexit. For example, it is mentioned that Frankfurt may benefit from business relocations related to Brexit, but in the same breath it is stated that other European cities may benefit as well, for example Dublin (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 39, code FAZ5.1.1.2). This, again, shows that Frankfurt’s position should not be viewed in isolation but indicates that it is closely related to other cities and their location factors as well. Global financial centers such as New York and Singapore are mentioned as potential competitors as well, possibly impeding relocations to Frankfurt (The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.7/D1.7.1).

The political realm may play a role in this context as well. For example, the lack of support from the government in the attempt to attract business may be seen as a barrier to relocation (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 39, code FAZ5.1.2.1). Furthermore, location advantages such as the ECB may not only be an advantage but also a disadvantage: For instance, it is put forward in the article that Frankfurt may have diminished chances of attracting EBA because it is already home to two EU institutions, namely the ECB and the insurance regulator EIOPA (ibid.).

Overall, there are not only location factors facilitating future developments in Frankfurt but also factors impeding potential developments, which may potentially keep Frankfurt's spatial identity steady rather than change it.

5.5.2 London

5.5.2.1 Location advantages

Some of the newspapers that were analyzed in this study put forward that London's status as financial capital will remain untouched, or largely untouched, by Brexit (e.g. codes 4.7, D1.6; see also sub-chapter 5.1.2). In this context, the newspapers have highlighted the factors which make it unlikely that London will lose its status as primary financial center. For example, even though London's attractiveness as the capital of founders may suffer from Brexit (code SZ4.4), Süddeutsche Zeitung quotes a former McKinsey manager who says that London will remain the capital for the fintech industry due to its favorable business environment, including its highly qualified workforce with the required expertise, the particular mix of financial and technological companies as well as the favorable tax policy of the UK government. In this context, she compares the UK's system to Germany's system, implying that in Germany there are extensive bureaucratic hurdles when it comes to company registration (codes SZ4.5, SZ4.5.1). It becomes clear here that location advantages of one city or country may be or become, by comparison, location disadvantages in another city, which has also come up with respect to the rental costs (see above). These positive factors mentioned here imply that London's future spatial identity, in particular the economic dimension of its identity, may be stable despite Brexit.

This also comes across in an article by The Times (article 6). A factor discussed here as a strength of London is its financial "ecosystem", which is argued to be unique and thus not easily replicable:

> "Miles Celic, the lobby group's chief executive, said: "No city has been created as an international financial centre by government diktat. It doesn't happen that way. It's tied to timezone, language, rule of law, quality of life. It takes a huge amount of time to build up a genuine ecosystem; an organism rather than a mechanism." (The Times, article 6, code T2.2.1)

This quote by Celic is somewhat at odds with what John Cryan says about Frankfurt approximately one year earlier in an article published in The Daily Telegraph (D1.5.1, see above; cf. appendix B/C). While this may simply be a difference in opinion, it also shows that there may be widely diverging perceptions and assessments of a city's ability and suitability to be, or become, a financial center. Here it should be noted, though, that later in the same article in The Daily Telegraph, John Cryan's position is somewhat mitigated, where it says:

> "Mr Cryan said London's infrastructure is unique and cannot easily be duplicated. It handles the lion's share of debt and equity securities issued in Europe. Roughly 40pc of global currency trades are booked in London, as are two thirds of all interest rate derivatives in euros." (The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.6)

Referring to Cryan's stance, the article here implies that London may not be easily contestable as financial center, implying the prospective stability of its spatial identity.

5.5.2.2 Location disadvantages

A "location factor" putting London at a disadvantage is Brexit in general. It may be detrimental to London's attractiveness, thus possibly influencing its spatial identity. For example, the executive of a London start-up, interviewed by Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 30), holds that Brexit is a barrier for London in that it deters qualified personnel and founders, making London less attractive for founders and qualified personnel from other EU countries (codes SZ4.1, SZ4.4). The factor of potential deterrence relates to the economic dimension of London's spatial identity, potentially influencing its economic appeal and negatively influencing its future spatial identity from an economic perspective.

5.5.3 Uncertainty

A factor which is also argued to influence the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt and should thus be seen as an influencing factor is the uncertainty associated with Brexit. This factor ties in with the two previous sub-themes, but I have decided to uncouple it from these sub-themes because it refers to the overall situation and not so much to specific location advantages or disadvantages of the cities under investigation.

The uncertainty associated with Brexit as such has been both construed as a facilitator and a barrier, at least to some extent, to relocation from London to other cities such as Frankfurt.

For example, the factor uncertainty is construed as motivating or accelerating the relocation of assets from London to the EU, including Frankfurt, because it is unclear what the relationship between the UK and the EU will look like in the future. It is implied here that companies rather want to act than wait, a topic which has been picked up by both The Independent (e.g. codes I2.2.1, I6.5) and

Süddeutsche Zeitung (code SZ1.3). Thus, in these cases, uncertainty is portrayed as a facilitator for relocation, which may affect the economic dimension of Frankfurt's and London's spatial identity and thus possibly also their social, judicial and political dimensions, as indicated above.

Uncertainty has also been discussed as a factor potentially impeding relocation. For instance, both The Independent (code I6.3) and Süddeutsche Zeitung (code SZ8.8) put forward that in the face of uncertainty, companies are likely to refrain from hastily relocating their assets and personnel from London to other cities. The extract in The Independent reads as follows:

> "As long as uncertainty persists, most institutions are likely to prefer to minimum solution." (The Independent, article 16, code I6.3).

The topic of uncertainty has also been brought up in relation to the real estate market in Frankfurt (Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 29, code SZ3.5.1). For example, it has been theorized to be a reason why there have been no concrete real estate leases as of the date on which the article was published (June 29, 2016). However, this may not be surprising, given the publication date, not even one week after the referendum.

The uncertainty has also been associated with price decreases on the London real estate market, which may lead to further decreases in the future if uncertainty persists (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 37, code FAZ3.2/FAZ3.2.1).

To conclude, the uncertainty associated with Brexit may also have an impact on economic decisions such as relocation, and it may thus also, by implication, influence the future of the spatial identities of Frankfurt and London, respectively.

6. Conclusion

With regard to the future spatial identities of London and Frankfurt, the media have constructed different scenarios relating to different dimensions of the cities' identities. As the analysis has shown, these dimensions, and the cities overall, are connected as well, with the economic dimension as the focal theme on each side to which the other themes connect. Particularly with regard to the economic dimension of the cities' spatial identities, the analysis has revealed that multiple constructions of space may co-exist and compete against one another, but it has also been shown that there may be overlap as well (cf. Christmann 2016b, Choudhary 2014). The media have also made the present spatial identities of London and Frankfurt relevant in their construction of the future, construing the respective present and future spatial identities of the cities as closely interwoven.

It may not be surprising, though, that the economy-related aspects of the cities' spatial identities come up repeatedly in the data, given that the very reason why these cities are discussed together in the media is business-related: the potential loss passporting rights in the financial industry, and the potential trade barriers and disruptions for other companies (Chu 2017, Inman 2019).

However, an analysis like the present one should only be regarded a snapshot of how spatial identities may be constructed in the media. The communicative construction of space is a process, and it does not only involve one mode of communication but many, including non-verbal ones (cf. Reichertz 2013). It thus happens continuously, which an analysis of written documents such as newspaper articles can only partly reflect. As Ek (2006) points out, space should be regarded as a process, “a verb rather than a noun” (Ek 2006, 49).

It will be interesting to see what the future holds for London and Frankfurt. The Brexit process is still ongoing, and a new Prime Minister will take over in June. Brexit may mean many things for London and Frankfurt. Or as Wells (n.d.) calls it: “Brexit: the only certainty is uncertainty”.

6.1 Practical implications

The present study may have practical implications.

One field for which the results may be useful is (re)location marketing. As the analysis has shown, the potential relocation of companies and jobs may have a positive impact on Frankfurt’s future economic spatial identity, which may strengthen the city’s overall power on financial markets, but there may also be a negative side to it. For instance, the social fabric of the city may be affected negatively if the influx of workers from London leads to a marginalization of local residents on the housing and school markets. A practical implication for (re)location marketing agencies in Frankfurt is thus that both sides of the coin should be considered: The relocation of companies and jobs should be weighed against the potentially negative effects on local residents so as to avoid their marginalization. That is, relocation marketing agencies should approach their work with a holistic mindset, not only marketing their city for newcomers from the outside but also consider local residents.

But not only (re)location marketing agencies may do their part. As the German-French politician Daniel Cohn-Bendit, quoted in an article by Süddeutsche Zeitung (article 33), has pointed out, companies themselves could be called on to “pay more than just their taxes”. For example, he suggests that they should get involved in and contribute to housing projects (code SZ7.5.2.1). A similar approach is suggested by an entrepreneur quoted in an article in Frankfurter Neue Presse (article 18). He calls for the development of new models of residential settlement (code F2.12). He also relates this to Frankfurt’s future attractiveness as a place to live: “[…] If a metropolis like Frankfurt does not make room for all population groups, it will not be worthwhile anymore” (ibid.).

Overall, an analysis of how the media construct spatial identities may help to illuminate the interplay between different identity dimensions and provide an impulse for the future: There may be two sides to the potential economic benefits that Frankfurt may gain in the context of Brexit, but to alleviate the potential negative consequences for local residents, a holistic thinking may be required, involving a cooperation of both (re)location marketing agencies, companies, politics – and local residents.

With regard to London's future spatial identity, several different scenarios have been discussed, some more optimistically, some more pessimistically, all, however, predicting some losses in London. Also, it has come up in one article that London may lose its attractiveness for founders and other qualified personnel from other EU countries (cf. Süddeutsche Zeitung, article 30), which may overall indicate that Brexit could, or has already become, a location disadvantage for London. By extension, more specifically, the lack of qualified personnel could also become a location disadvantage (cf. Balderjahn 2014, 61). It could be argued that this has practical implications for (re)location marketing agencies in London as well, which may have to set out to transform this potential weakness into a strength to make London more attractive as a business location (ibid.: 142). In other words, these agencies may thus have to address this disadvantage in their work, highlighting other location advantages or creating new ones, which may, then, involve other stakeholders as well, such as politics (cf. ibid.: 61-65).

6.2 Opportunities for future research

This study also provides several different starting points for future research.

For example, as the present analysis has already touched upon, some of the articles analyzed have used a certain language through which they have conveyed what scenario they find likely regarding the future economic spatial identities of London and Frankfurt. For example, some articles expressed an economic, competition-oriented logic by referring to the potential beneficiaries as 'winners' (e.g. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, article 40, e.g. code FAZ5.1). However, since thematic analysis as such is not designed for detailed linguistic analyses (cf. Braun and Clarke 2006), only linguistic features relevant for the spatial identity construction in the media were elicited; other linguistic features or discourses have not been analyzed in depth. This may provide impetus for future research: One could, for instance, use Discourse Analysis as a method of data analysis to extract and analyze the different discourses through which the relocation discussions are construed (e.g. Bryman 2012, 528-541). For example, an article in The Guardian has presented the efforts exerted by European cities to attract business as theft (cf. article 1, code G1.1: "steal 'low-hanging fruit'"), while other articles have called the competition among EU cities as a 'battle' (e.g. The Daily Telegraph, article 7, code D1.1).

In addition, even though Christmann's (2016b) theory on the communicative reconstruction of space holds that the media may play an important role in the construction of space (and implicitly spatial identity), it does not describe more closely what may happen to this construction on the recipient side. This study has discussed possible different scenarios and interpretations, but it may also be interesting to involve other people and see how they perceive what is conveyed to them in the media. For example, one could conduct narrative interviews (cf. Brüsemeister 2008, 99-149) with local residents in Frankfurt and London to examine how they construct their own city and the respective other city, or to examine how they perceive the media reporting as regards these cities and Brexit. To yield a more fully-fledged communicative constructivist approach to the construction of the spatial identities, it might also be interesting to analyze interactions between people (e.g. among local residents, between local residents and visitors, etc.) and examine how they construct the identity of the space they are located in, what they make relevant in the conversation, which may, then, also involve non-verbal modes of communication (cf. Reichertz 2013).

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