

entire issue structure, however, by dedicating more attention to certain topics than others. The same is true of the political system (see Eichhorn 2005, 149f).

Already at the end of February, Federal Minister of Finance Peer Steinbrück announced the true target of the entire operation: "This is not just about Liechtenstein. We are also talking about Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Austria. We want to combat all tax havens in Europe." (FTD, 25.2.2008, 9).

The FAZ of 20.2.2008 ("Trillions flow to tax havens", 1) summarized vividly that the goal is to find a sensible approach toward the approximately 60 offshore centers, since an estimated USD 5 trillion are managed there. The OECD sees a major change in international financial flows in this regard. Allegedly 90% of investments in India originate in the Mauritius financial center. Two thirds of the money invested in Cyprus was invested in Russia before the Mediterranean island joined the EU. So this is not simply about the economic interests of Germany on the one side and Liechtenstein and Switzerland on the other. The greater picture is also not just about tax evasion, but about the worldwide protection of legally acquired and invested assets from corruption and State terrorism.

In summary, one can say that there are essentially *two major issue areas* under which the abovementioned eight individual main issues (in the view of the author) as well as the other issues can be structured.

Between the two States of Germany and Liechtenstein, the issue is that of *tax evasion* by German citizens with the help of legal instruments and institutions available to Liechtenstein. Between Liechtenstein and the international community as well as between Germany and the international community – represented by organizations such as the EU, OECD, etc. – the issue is that of treaty rules, i.e. agreements, that mutually govern the various *transnational tax questions*. If we further summarize the issue structure using a single term, the major issue is that of "**taxes**".

The choice of words in the dispute

It is interesting to observe the rapid development of the personified "Zumwinkel case" (14.2.) into a "Liechtenstein affair" (already on 15.2.) and finally a "Liechtenstein scandal" (at the latest starting Monday, 18.2.). According to SPIEGEL online of 18.2.2008 ("The BND treasure"), this was an "economic detective story like never before in Germany." The language exhibits sensationalism – also on the part of the media: 30 house searches on Monday, 18.2.2008 even induce the otherwise rather restrained NZZ to print the headline: "Unprecedented hunt for German tax evaders".

With respect to strong language, the representatives of both countries have nothing to reproach each other with. While the German Minister of Finance spoke of "thumb screws" he wanted to use against Liechtenstein (Reuters, dpa, 22.2.2008), such as a source tax on money transfers to Liechtenstein, Hereditary Prince Alois spoke of "dealing in stolen goods on a massive scale". These statements stick. The question can even be legitimately raised whether it was not in fact this word choice that attracted the media coverage and that gave Liechtenstein, which otherwise was hardly heard from, the possibility of positioning itself in a prominent place in the media with its own statements.