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„The Impact of Trust in News Media and Political Knowledge:
Influences on a Priming Effect of a Fake News Label on the
Evaluation of News“

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Abstract

Aim of this thesis was to test whether priming through a fake news label affects how people evaluate (fake / real) news articles and if this process is moderated by trust in news media and political knowledge in a German-speaking context. An experiment was performed within a conceptual replication of a survey by Van Duyn and Collier (2019). The objective was to verify their findings in a modified manner to examine whether the theory of media priming may be generalized here. The replication was extended in order to investigate moderating effects. No significant results could be found neither regarding a priming effect nor in terms of possible moderator variables. Priming may not be generalized in this context. The results add valuable findings as it highlights the necessity of replication in social sciences.

Ziel der Arbeit war es herauszufinden, ob Priming durch ein Fake News Label Auswirkungen darauf hat, wie Personen im deutschsprachigen Raum (fake / real) Nachrichtenartikel bewerten und ob dieser Prozess durch Medienvertrauen und Politisches Wissen moderiert wird. Im Zuge einer konzeptuellen Replikation einer Studie von Van Duyn und Collier (2019) wurde ein Experiment durchgeführt. Somit sollten deren Erkenntnisse in einem adaptierten Forschungsdesign überprüft werden, um zu testen, ob die Theorie des Medienprimings hier generalisiert werden kann. Zudem wurde die Replikation erweitert, um herauszufinden, ob der Prozess des Primings moderiert wird. Es konnten keine signifikanten Ergebnisse hinsichtlich eines Primingseffektes und Moderationseffekten gefunden werden. Priming sollte in diesem Kontext nicht generalisiert werden. Diese Ergebnisse sind eine wertvolle wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis, insofern sie die Notwendigkeit von Replikationen in Sozialwissenschaften unterstreichen.

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Introduction

„You’re fake news “- this statement by the former president of the United States, Donald Trump, has resonated considerably with his supporters. The accusation taps into a growing mistrust in social news networks that are assumed to be spreading false information. And now at times of the COVID 19 pandemic a distortion of facts reignited once again (see Graves, 2013; Lazer et al., 2018; McNair, 2017; Metzger et al., 2003; Nielsen & Graves, 2017a; Tsfatı & Cappella, 2003).

In fact, fake news is nothing new. The circulation of false information seems to be of long-standing presence but has regained attention in the digital news framework. In social networks information can be published free of gatekeeping through traditional media outlets. If this information is now judged credible depends on various factors. Subtle hints within the message, the source or the medium, as well as the psychological disposition or the role of social identity of a person can influence the process of judging credibility. Next to this, currently another phenomenon seems to become more important. The so-called fake news label may also affect the way information is evaluated though its actual influence still has to be further investigated (see Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Fisher, 2016; Flanagin et al., 2000; Gelfert, 2018; Metzger et al., 2003; Neuberger & Quandt, 2009; Shu et al., 2017a).

Accusing media outlets of spreading false facts or even lying has become part of a political communication strategy and should not be underestimated. Often this fake news label is associated with an anti-elitist attitude in order to reject traditional media outlets. This involves a severe form of media criticism. In principle, criticizing the media is necessary and appropriate. Yet, this extreme, irrational form might entail serious consequences both for the producer and the consumer of news information. Media outlets may possibly respond with self-censorship whereas the audience could lose trust in news media (see Butsch, 2008; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Engesser et al., 2017; Hameleers et al., 2017; Smith, 2010; Vande Berg et al., 2004).

Van Duyn and Collier (2019) even claim that a fake news label is capable of changing the way people judge the credibility of information. In an experiment they could show that people who were exposed to a fake news label were less competent in recognizing real news as veritable messages. They further state that this fake news label operates as a media prime.

By taking a closer look on the concept of media priming one constantly encounters the construct of trust in news media as well as political knowledge. These concepts seem to not just serve as the basis for democratic structures but may also affect the influence of media primes. Hence, it would be important to observe if these variables moderate the effect of a fake news label in form of a media prime. Furthermore, the research focus here is on the US American area even though fake news and accusing the media to spread false information is a global phenomenon (see Coleman et al., 2012; Delli Carpini, 2000; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Peter, 2002).

Therefore, it would be exciting to investigate the impact of a fake news label in different geographical and sociocultural contexts. Solely an extensive investigation allows to make general statements. Thus, the experiment of Van Duyn and Collier (2019) shall be conceptually replicated in the course of this thesis by adapting population, geographical context and parts of the material development. All these modifications will be based on great accuracy (see Bonett, 2012; Schmidt, 2009; Standing et al., 2014). In addition, the study will be extended by including the concepts of trust in news media and political knowledge in order to investigate if a moderating effect on media primes in the form of a fake news label can be observed.

Hence, the following research questions arise:

RQ1: What are the influences of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles in a German-speaking context?

RQ2: How does political knowledge and trust in news media moderate priming effects of a fake news label in a German-speaking context on the capacity of evaluating of (fake / real) news articles?

At the beginning, an extensive theoretical foundation is necessary to clarify the definition of fake news and the fake news label, its origins and how it is evaluated as well as the consequences of the development of the world wide web in this matter. Further, in order to understand the impact of a fake news label, the theory of priming as well as the constructs of trust in news media and political knowledge shall be discussed. Following a theoretical analysis, a conceptual replication with an extension of the Van Duyn and Collier (2019) experiment will be performed.

Theoretical Foundation / Literature Review

Historical Context

Even though fake news are strongly connected to the rise of digital media and its challenges (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019) the act of faking news stories is not a novelty. In fact, each technological advance has brought with it its own forms of deception (Gelfert, 2018). For example, the telegraph in the 19th century added new dimensions and speed into news distribution, just as social media algorithms do today. And ever since such new developments have been taken advantage of by those with an interest in spreading false information, propaganda or mischief (Gelfert, 2018; Van Heekeren, 2020).

Fake news therefore is an issue not only related to the 21st century as there are several antecedents with relevance to the current situation. Even at the times of Ancient Athens, the spread of false information by traders for financial reasons was a common act. This led to an enactment of laws in order to punish the guilty with death and torture. In 1275, false information still remained such a complex issue wherefore it was enclosed as a clause in the “Statute of Westminster”. The invention of the Gutenberg printing press in 1450 then completely revolutionized the spreading of fake news. This new opportunity of dissemination subsequently led to the first large scale news hoax in 1835 – „The Great Moon Hoax“, in which „The New York Sun“ reported about alleged life on the moon (Love, 2007; Posetti & Matthews, 2018).

Especially notable in this context is the publisher William Randolph Hearst. He was convinced that journalism should be activist and intervene in „national and international affairs“ (Love, 2007 p.35). With his war-mongering reporting in 1897 Hearst significantly contributed to the United States entering war against Spain by accusing the Spanish of the explosion of the USS Marine in the harbor of Havana. Rivaling newspapers strongly condemned his style of reporting. „The New York Evening News“, for example, labeled it as a „gross misrepresentation of the facts“ (Gelfert, p. 90).

In 1898, the critic J.B. Montgomery-McGovern consciously looked at fake journalism in the journal *Arena* with the piece „An important phase of gutter journalism: Faking“. Known as a common practice among *fakers* was to spread false information through the so-called *stand-for*. This practice then led to mislead not only the recipient of such information but also the middleman, usually the editor of a local newspaper. A reputable member of a specific professional sector like a doctor, an architect or a businessman acted as such a *stand-for*, who would sell stories with their good image to reporters investigating a story. This differs from the conventional practice in the 21st century. Nowadays it is more likely to directly address audiences with a news story. This works especially well through the sharing of spectacular stories (Gelfert, 2018; Love, 2007).

As already mentioned, the invention of the telegraph in the 19th century marked another start of a new era of spreading information in which a fast and extensive distribution of (false) information also across geographic boundaries has become possible (Van Heekeren, 2020).

In 1919, shortly after World War I, false information was seen as highly problematic by the League of Nations, which is why they took into account to take action against this circumstance in the course of the „moral disarmament“ (Tworek, 2010, p.27).

Even three decades after, the dissemination of false information was still of great topical importance leading to a Convention on the International Right of Correction in 1953, which still remains open. This Convention, which got signed by 12 countries, allowed states to intervene and correct published false information. Around this time the profound examination of the issue of fake news seemed to come to an end and has been disregarded for more than half a century in which no international action was prompted. But of course, the spread of false information has not stopped but rather become more discrete (Van Heekeren, 2020).

The discussion seemed to gather dusk just until recently, with fast-moving social media platforms creating a new environment for the dissemination of fake news (Waisbord, 2018a). Hence, one can say that disinformation is not a new concept, but seems to be increasingly

problematic in a digitized world (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Vosoughi et al., 2018; Zhang & Ghorbani, 2020).

Fake News in a Digital Era

The development of the World Wide Web in the 1990s created new possibilities in the exchange of information as well as new ways of communication. Due to its simple handling, low costs, and real-time information dissemination, social media platforms, like Twitter and Facebook, gained importance throughout a broader public. Social interaction now is increasingly located in online platforms. This leads to a growing access to information through social media pushing traditional news media into the background (Shu et al., 2017b).

In 2016, for example, 62% of the American population accessed news through online channels. An ongoing trend with an exponentially growing number (Pew Research Center, 2016). This evolution of the internet or social media as popular news sources can also be observed in other parts of the world. In Austria, for example, according to the Digital News Report of the University of Oxford's Reuters Institute a considerable amount of the respondents names online sources for news access and even 44,6% state to receive news information through social media (Gadringer et al., 2020).

In this context Shu et al. (2017) define two possible causes. First, accessing news through social networks is simply less time consuming and cheaper than via traditional media. Second, it enables the user to actively share, comment and discuss information with a broader public.

Within the Web 2.0, traditional media lost their monopoly on information. Information dissemination no longer solely is in the hands of journalists, editors and media owners. Hence, one-to-one-communication has shifted to many-to many-communication weakening the journalist's role of a gatekeeper. Traditional news media therefore loses its power in controlling the flow of information (Neuberger & Quandt, 2009; Oswald, 2013).

The new dynamic within the information cycle creates best conditions for the spread of different forms of false information. Fake News, for example, are now rather located in social media than in mainstream media (Van Heekeren, 2020).

This, as well, leads to difficulties in the verification of information sources in social networks. It seemed already problematic in times of telegraph communication, but there is a stark difference to communication in the environment of social networks. Cabled false information in comparison to fake news transmitted in social networks was published in mainstream media. Distributed information on social media on the other hand is produced by various actors and remains in this social media sphere (ibid.).

This great amount of false information for the purpose of confusion and persuasion is leading to substantial problems. Thus, Fake News have become a highly relevant issue for both industry and academia, as they adversely affect one's online activity. It has been especially problematic in the aspect of political polarization in the course of political campaigning as the voter might get confused and misled by false political claims or statements (Zhang & Ghorbani, 2020).

Despite this pessimistic view some scholars even recognize positive impacts of this new digital environment when comparing the spread of false information in a pre-digital era to today's circumstances. According to Van Heekeren (2020) false information in previous times was hard to correct and reached a broad audience through mainstream media like newspapers. A rectification of facts could only take place within a news article again. Today this has changed. Fake News might spread faster but may also be discovered more rapidly. Through the world wide web, one is not only enabled to spread false information but is also able to use the various opportunities of the internet to correct fake news. Hence, various fact-checkers made it their goal to detect false information even though still in the digital environment it is hard to eliminate falsehood (Graves & Cherubini, 2016; Van Heekeren, 2020).

Fact Checking

An ongoing trend in fact-checking in the digital world can be observed which indicates that fake news have become pervasive and recognised as highly problematic outside the scientific discourse (Zhang & Ghorbani, 2020).

Hence, Graves and Cherubini (2016) investigated how these fact-checkers are organised all over Europe. They have shown that it seems that in many cases fact-checkers are found on their own websites and social media and that there are regional differences in Europe. In western countries it appears that fact-checking is rather included in existing media companies whereas in the eastern part of Europe there is a trend to independent NGOs operating as autonomous fact-checkers. However, both organizational forms are popular throughout Europe sharing similar goals namely distinguishing truth and falsehood (Graves & Cherubini, 2016). Yet, there are differences of what various kinds of fact-checkers are reaching for with detecting false information. According to Graves and Cherubini (2016) the reasons might be diverse like „placing different levels of emphasises on informing citizens, holding politicians accountable, seeking policy change“ (p. 23). The scholars further divide fact-checkers into three categories, namely the *reporters*, *reformers* and *experts*. While *reporters* consider it as their vocation, *reformers* follow activist and political interests. *Experts* on the other hand aim to analyse complex policy issues with their expertise (ibid.).

In general, fact-checkers especially those operating in NGOs are very much dependent on established media outlets to spread their revelations in order to reach a broader audience. Yet, the way media deals with these findings is often not satisfying to them as news outlets, for example, tend to exaggeratedly present politicians as liars while fact-checkers prefer to just clarify facts. And even if some fact-checkers aim to show political misconduct, the reaction of politicians on fact-checks are sobering. Mostly, they ignore or neglect such rectifications (Graves & Cherubini, 2016).

Post-truth Politics

In 2004, Ralph Keyes already discussed the idea of *post-truth* (Keyes, 2004), which just recently got considered more intensively in the discourse over politics (Hopkin & Rosamond, 2017; Lockie, 2017).

The concept got widely recognised when the Oxford Dictionary declared *post-truth* the Word of the Year in 2016 (Oxford English Dictionary, 2016). Reason for this might have been political campaigning around Brexit as well as the US presidential election campaigning in 2016. These key events have long been intensively discussed in connection with the phenomenon of post-truth politics (Hopkin & Rosamond, 2017; Lockie, 2017; Peters, 2017).

And now, after the continuing turbulences around the COVID 19 pandemic the discussion about post-truth seems to continue. As WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus puts it we find ourselves not just in an epidemic but rather in an *infodemic*. The popularity of false information and fake news seems to reach its peak. This is comprehensible as according to Van Heekeren (2016) „disinformation is a cyclical occurrence that manifests most during periods of broader social and political instability“ (p. 315). A trend which has been supported by the strategies of post-truth politics (Sismondo, 2017; WHO, 2020).

Post-truth implies that facts lack correct assessment by its audience leading to questioning, for instance, scientific knowledge. In many cases this suspiciousness is fostered and promoted by public figures with large audiences like politicians (Hansson, 2017; Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Scheufele & Krause, 2019).

In a society of post-truth politics and uncertainty these voices are very likely to be listened to. Now, post-truth communication strategies seem to receive more attention than actual policies. This can be considered as a dangerous development as politicians might not intend to critically question so-called facts but rather create their own reality in order to be successful (Lockie, 2017).

In this regard populist and anti-elitist attitudes have a key role (Hopkin & Rosamond, 2017). Extremist groups, both on the radical right and radical left, are often convinced that their personal beliefs are the only possible truth. The result is a rejection of everything not consistent with their opinion (Peters, 2017). Yet, Hopkin and Rosamond (2017) add to the discussion that it is important to consider post-truth as a broader phenomenon even though it often seems to be associated with populism.

The Oxford dictionary points out that within post-truth politics facts become more and more irrelevant when communicating with the public. More important, however, is to attract emotional dispositions of a person (Oxford English Dictionary, 2016). Following this concept the success of post-truth politics might be traced back to the fact that information is preferably evaluated based on existing views within an individual (Lockie, 2017). By addressing one's emotions, information might have a higher impact than bare facts (Schneider, 2017).

This might explain why post-truth political developments seem to be especially present in a digital information era as it has become very easy to reach a broad audience with emotionally charged messages on platforms like Twitter (Peters, 2017). Scholars and journalists have equally noticed that Twitter appears to be a place where post-truth political actions could accumulate (Sismondo, 2017).

This is crucial in the current situation of the COVID 19 pandemic in which each and every one is now more than ever forced to make decisions based on an evaluation of information. The prevalence of the idea of a post-truth society has become particularly apparent as recent scientific evidence regarding the pandemic or vaccinations is questioned by a considerable part of the population (Barzilai & Chinn, 2020).

Barzilai and Chinn (2020) therefore suggest several ways to face the phenomena of post-truth which impacts on society should not be underestimated. In their opinion the main focus in approaching the issue of post-truth political environments should be on promoting media literacy. For this purpose, they provided four categories which might indicate why people are

prone to fail at assessing facts. These include „not knowing how to know, fallible ways of knowing, not caring about truth (enough), and disagreeing about how to know“ (Barzilai & Chinn, 2020, p. 108).

This given complexity it is obvious that it needs to be investigated what might contribute to the popularity of post-truth politics.

Fake News Genre versus Fake News Label

In order to understand the phenomenon of post-truth politics it is necessary to take a closer look at the term *fake news*. This expression is not only applied in order to define false information but also gets instrumentalised by political actors in order to achieve their personal goals (Hanitzsch et al., 2018; Nielsen & Graves, 2017b; UN et al., 2017).

Using the term fake news in order to attack media outlets seems to be a popular practice in political communication aiming to discredit news media and assuming that news information is false information (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019). This instrumentalised use of the term might not solely lead to political success but also entails far-reaching consequences. Hence, such attacks could promote distrust in news media and journalists by purporting that they become less trustworthy (UN et al., 2017).

Certainly, since Donald Trump's presence on social networks namely the platform Twitter, an instrumentalised application of the term fake news has reached a broader audience. He preferably made use of it in order to neutralise unfavourable news reporting regarding his person (Hanitzsch et al., 2018).

It is therefore obvious that the phenomenon of fake news requires differentiated consideration. During an extensive literature research on this particular topic, it became apparent that defining the term fake news remains a difficult task. This could be due to the fact that false information in times of social media seems to constantly evolve. In the academic discourse it

has already been recognised but still lacks of empirical evidence (Zimmermann & Kohring, 2018).

Despite difficulties in the exact classification of fake news a brief overview should be given in the following. At first a distinction between „*fake news as a genre and fake news as a label*“ (p. 98) like it has been suggested by Egelhofer et al. (2019) should be done. Therefore, both of this subdimensions of fake news shall be examined.

Fake News Genre

Similarly, complex as the historical classification of fake news is the definition of the term and the criteria that must be met to classify false information as so-called fake news.

It appears that fake news as already illustrated are not an absolute novelty. Yet, the perspective on the exact subject matter seems to constantly change due to new urgency in digital environments. Some authors particularly put fake news in the context of social networks and limit it to online information (Bounegru et al., 2018). Yet, if fake news should be restricted to social networks is not clearly defined as there are various approaches (Zimmermann & Kohring, 2018).

This is not the only aspect in which the definition of fake news appears inconsistent as one might observe a lack of system in the heterogeneous definitions. Only a few authors have provided a an exact categorisation like, for instance, Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019).

Three Elements of Fake News

Due to the vast array of definitions of the term fake news from various scholars, Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) determined *three pillars*. Along these three categories fake news as a genre shall be evaluated. They bring together that false information has to be „*low in facticity*“, underlie an „*intention to deceive*“ and come in a „*journalistic format*“ (p. 100) to be classified as fake news (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019, p. 100). In their opinion it is especially important to

mark what kind of information should be included as a too broad definition might result in a careless application of the term (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019).

Hence, these three elements shall be discussed in more detail in order to understand what lies behind the complex phenomenon of fake news as a genre.

Low in facticity. Solely the expression fake news points out that this type of news does not cover truthful reporting. Yet, there are different suggestions on how much of the information needs to be false. Some scholars speak of a complete disregard of facts while others stress that fake news have to at least contain „misleading elements“ (Bakir & McStay, 2018, p. 157). This wording indicates that even information that is not completely incorrect might be classified as fake news (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Bakir & McStay, 2018).

In summary, it can be said that false content has to be included at least to some degree. News content might also be fake news if it is not entirely untrue (Zimmermann & Kohring, 2018). However, the exact amount of falsehood has not yet been determined (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019).

Journalistic format. Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) point out another aspect which seems to be reflected by various authors, namely that fake news has to appear as if it was a genuine journalistic product (DiFranzo 2017 p. 34).

Fake news imitate or as Gelfert, (2018) puts it „mimic the ‘look and feel’ of mainstream sources to garner credibility“ (p. 91) which can be seen as an act of disrespect towards established media outlets. This is often facilitated through traditional elements of news reporting (Tandoc et al., 2018).

Intention to deceive. Next, most scholars agree that fake news might deceive its audience. This is the logical consequence if one assumes that fake news imitates news messages and lacks factual information. Yet, some scholars argue that this deception is deliberate and characteristic for fake news (Horne & Adali, 2017). However, to what extent this deceit occurs

remains ambiguous as some authors speak of „intentional disinformation“ (McNair, 2017, p. 38).

Another interesting aspect is, that in the academic discourse it is mentioned that false information has to be explicitly perceived as fake news in order to be considered as fake news (Gelfert, 2018; Tandoc et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of the audience (Zimmermann & Kohring, 2018). Regarding the impact of fake news on society this is of particular importance. In studying the phenomenon, it is essential to consider its recipients as well.

Further, it should not be forgotten that false information might also be the product of mistakes in journalistic reporting or as Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) call it, „poor or bad journalism“ (p.101). This has less to do with an intention to mislead the audience. Following McNair (2017) journalists exercise their profession as „human beings in all their frailty and imperfection“ (McNair, 2017, p. 23). Thus, accidental mistakes shall not be classified as fake news. However, journalists might also have a particular motivation to leave out certain facts in their reporting. Hence, Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) point out that fake news might be spread out of political or ideological as well as solely commercial reasons. This could imply a maximisation of profits by means of click baiting (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Dewey, 2016).

Political motivated messages can be located on partisan media outlets which are especially prone to spread false information (Vargo et al., 2018). With the internet and its various blogs and partisan websites the spread of political motivated false information speeded up (Weeks & Holbert, 2013).

Next to this, false information may be intended to be humorous or provoking (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). In this case it is not clear if this kind of content can be defined as fake news as political satire or news parodies might not entail all the characteristics presented by Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019). Here, the message might as well be based on facts and if not,

so it does not seem to be intended to mislead its audience as the primary aim is to entertain (Egelhofer, 2019).

Having this in mind it is obvious that fake news is very difficult to categorise as different forms of false information seem to overlap. Therefore, it is reasonable to put these different sorts of false information into context with the three elements of fake news provided by Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019).

Related Concepts

In the midst of various forms of false information like propaganda, misinformation and disinformation, conspiracy theories, rumors or hoaxes actual fake news are difficult to identify (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Gelfert, 2018). In order to detect the overlaps of these phenomena, it shall be examined in detail.

The concept of propaganda aims to sell ideas over a manipulation of cognitions (Jowett; O'Donnell, 2014, p. 7). Thus, propagandist intend to influence its audience with information in the style of journalistic reporting (Jowett, Garth; O'Donnell, 2014 p. 7). Especially in the digital environment due to echo chamber effects, micro targeting and algorithms, propaganda has gained attention. An example might be political bots or manipulative social media campaigning (Neudert, 2017).

Further, expressions like misinformation and disinformation frequently get associated with fake news. Especially disinformation is similarly connoted as fake news. Several scholars define fake news as a subcategory of disinformation. Zimmermann and Kohring (2018) even propose to replace the term fake news by „recent disinformation“ (p. 530) in order to narrow the definition. It is also important to highlight that disinformation cannot be used synonymously with misinformation. Misinformation solely refers to false information. On the contrary, disinformation and fake news are additionally based on an intention to mislead (Egelhofer &

Lecheler, 2019). In either way false information shall not be underestimated as it might have severe impacts on society (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Flynn et al., 2017).

Hoaxes are another form of false information which intend not only to sell false facts but also to expose those who would fall for it (Bergmann, 1993; Gelfert, 2018). A particular example in that regard is the so-called Sokal hoax. The theoretical physicist Alan Sokal tried to point out questionable standards in some parts of postmodern cultural studies with a text published in *Social Text* (Lingua Franca, 2001).

The spread of fake news might also lead to rumors but that does not necessarily mean that rumors have to be based on false information. There might be also rumors including fact-based information as they can be defined as „unauthorized messages that are always of universal interest and accordingly are disseminated diffusely“ (Bergmann, 1993, p.70). Rumors have the potential to further evolve into urban legends (Allport & Leo, 1947; Gelfert, 2018).

Last but not least, conspiracy theories a phenomenon which seems to recently have gained popularity shall be mentioned. Especially in times of the COVID 19 pandemic conspiracy theories as a form of false information seem to be highly problematic as scientific evidence is questioned (Earnshaw et al., 2020). Conspiracy theories arise out of complex circumstances aiming to make difficult issues accessible by offering simple explanations (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019, p. 102). If these ideas are now communicated by powerful voices it might lead to a great acceptance among its audience (Earnshaw et al., 2020). This shows that messages coming from opinion leaders should not be underestimated.

Fake News Label

Altogether it can be said that the spread of false information in a digitized world is rather complex. Next to this, there appears to be another problem resulting out of this negative connotation in the context of fake news. Especially politicians now tend to use the term as a political communication instrument in order to discredit media outlets by portraying them as biased or

accusing them to spread false information (Albright, 2017; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Vosoughi et al., 2018). This trend of an increased delegitimization of media outlets by political actors has to be critically examined as it entails great implications affecting news media and journalistic independence (Albright, 2017; Carlson, 2017).

Another problematic aspect of this instrument in political communication is that it is rather used unjustified in order to delegitimise than to evaluate in a critical manner (Albright, 2017; Lischka, 2019). An indication for this is that such allegations often won't provide actual justification of why the media got blamed for a spread of false information (McNair, 2017).

These trends may fundamentally harm the work of media reporting as even the United Nations stated in a joint declaration in corporation with other well-known organisations that they are:

[...] alarmed at instances in which public authorities denigrate, intimidate and threaten the media,

including by stating that the media is “the opposition” or is “lying” and has a hidden political agenda, which increases the risk of threats and violence against journalists, undermines public trust and confidence in journalism as a public watchdog, and may mislead the public by blurring the lines between disinformation and media products containing independently verifiable facts.

(UN et al., 2017, p. 1)

Frequently directly associated with Donald Trump the fake news label has become popular all over the globe (Newman et al., 2018; RSF, 2017). For example, the term *lying press* - the equivalent of the fake news label in German-speaking areas - became of similar significance and may have severe impacts (Denner & Peter, 2017).

Denner and Peter (2017) stated that an increased occurrence of the term *lying press* might result in using it in a less prudent manner to describe media. Certainly, one characteristic of the term *lying press* might be its focus not merely on single messages but rather on

journalistic institutions as a whole. It seems to be applied systematically as a strategy of discreditation (Koliska & Assmann, 2019). Despite its currency this term is not a new incidence and can be found already 100 years ago in Germany. Initially the term was used over the course of the First World War and regained interest by the Nazis in order to discredit national media outlets (Koliska & Assmann, 2019; Seidler, 2016). Nowadays it appears to be popular to use the term *lying press* as a populist form of criticism (Koliska & Assmann, 2019).

These accusations of being fake or to lie seem to be part of a widely spread trend in political communication of delegitimising news outlets through criticism. A phenomenon with significant impacts on both the journalistic way of working and the public's perception of media (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Ladd, 2010).

After in-depth literature research it can be stated that fake news in general whether in the form a *fake news as a label* or *fake news as a genre* seems to be of high relevance and its impacts on society should not be underrated (see Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019). Yet, it was apparent that there is little empirical research on this matter. There are certainly some studies, but it could be observed that these tend to merely focus on the US American area. That is reasonable if one has in mind the political communication style of Donald Trump but it should not be ignored that attacks on news reporting can be located in various geographical contexts (Denner & Peter, 2017).

Further, research on fake news as a genre as well as a label needs to be conducted. Likewise, Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) suggest in their essay that there is a need for an extensive analysis of these concepts.

Regarding the fake news label, which will be focused on in the empirical part of this thesis, they separate the research area into three parts. There needs to be clarified how the fake news label is applied, how it influences media reporting itself as well as its impacts on its audience. It is important to investigate in which forms these attacks on news reporting appear and

who is addressed in order to find ways of how media professionals can deal with it. Here, it is important to evaluate how they respond to these attacks already (ibid.).

Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) mention, for instance, the concept of self-censorship because these accusations could force journalists to avoid certain topics due to a threat of criticism. Further, it can be assumed that not solely journalists are affected by such assaults. There might be severe impacts on society as a whole which shall be investigated in the course of this thesis.

Accusing the media to be fake or lying can be seen as a special form of media criticism which shall be discussed in the following.

Media Criticism

The *fake news label* as a form of judgement on a meta level must be set in context with media criticism (Carlson, 2009; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019).

Due to its characteristics Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) define the fake news label as a delegitimising form of media criticism in contrast to media criticism in a democratic way. In order to objectively control the observance of journalistic norms of media outlets it should play an important role in democratic systems (Carey, 1974; Carlson, 2009, 2018).

Media criticism itself is not a new discovery. It has long been recognised and evolved every time a new type of media emerged (Berry, 2004; Ross, 1997). Initially this kind of criticism could be traced back to critique coming from representatives across science and politics. Moreover, personalities from religious communities and the fields of media usually commented journalistic reporting. In the meanwhile, the act of criticizing the media seems to be broadly based and have multiple sources (Jackob et al., 2019).

Keeping in mind, that recipients of news have to rely on the information provided by media outlets it is quite obvious that news reporting should be critically evaluated. This is necessary in order to counteract a certain tension between the media and its audiences. Otherwise, these audiences would be entirely dependent on journalistic messages (Kaun, 2014; Silverstone,

2007). In order to act as a good citizen, media criticism is a legitimate fundamental function in democratic systems (Butsch, 2008).

The ability to criticise news outlets in a reasonable way could be as well interpreted as an important part of media literacy and media competence so that one is able to properly assess content. This skill can be seen as a process which is constantly developing (Fedorov & Levitskaya, 2017; Potter, 2011).

Criticism directed at traditional media examines whether its reporting is relevant for society and follows journalistic standards. Korochensky et al. (2019) emphasises here the creative aspects of news production. The way how media provides and evaluates information is subsequently responsible of how its audience finds its way in society (Korochensky, 2003; Korochensky et al., 2019).

According to Vande Berg et al. (2004) media criticism should be structured and systematic entailing detailed descriptions and analysis of this critique in order to be transparent.

In summary, it can be said that media criticism is definitely appropriate and necessary. Yet, Williams (1985) already stressed that criticism may imply a negative connoted form of judging. Media criticism in a democratic manner ideally entails unemotional, plausible arguments of why the journalistic processes or products are criticised. Solely if one can comprehend critical accusations of why journalistic standards have not been met this criticism can be named legitimate or democratic. For democratic systems this plays a key role (Carey, 1974; Carlson, 2017). In order to have a greater impact on the implementation of such criticism it is vital to come in a civil and profound manner (Cheruiyot, 2018).

However, these standards of legitimate criticism increasingly does not seem to be met in the present discourse (Carlson, 2017). Nowadays criticism, often coming from a few political actors with vociferous criticism, is expressed emotional and non-reasonable with the objective of delegitimization (Chilton, 2004; Jakob et al., 2019). It is largely ignored that this way of

critique is rather based on cynicism than on legitimate argumentation and fails its original mission (Schultz, 2017).

Jackob et al. (2019) point out that the ideas of only a few populist voices may linger on broad parts of the population. According to him a lower level of trust in media may lead to media skepticism or even media cynicism if a person is particularly susceptible to conspiracy theories (ibid.).

This form of criticism serves as well as a political strategy to accuse media outlets or reporting with conflicting interests. Politicians often charge the news media to be fake or lying in an uncivil manner. Additionally, this is articulated without plausible arguments (Brants et al., 2010; Coe et al., 2014; Smith, 2010).

Charging unintentional mistakes in media reporting to be fake and accusing its outlet to lie right away is a risky manner. It is important to mention that these mistakes rarely force a spread of lies but are rather a distortion of truth. This might entail emphasis and selection of certain details as well as one-sided quoting of sources (Arnold, 2018; Hagen, 2015; Jackob et al., 2019). One has to note here that this may not be based on deliberate lies as it is often claimed in populist debates. This distortion of facts might also happen unintentional. In these cases well-founded criticism is requested and essential (Jackob et al., 2019).

Certainly, the fake news label does not meet the logic and reasoning behind constructive criticism. It rather involves empty phrases which „purpose is not to critically evaluate the quality of journalism to preserve it; rather, its purpose is to attack journalism’s legitimacy.“ (Egelhofer & Lecheler 2019, p. 107). Hence, attacks cannot be seen as legitimate criticism (Carey, 1974).

Anti-Elitism in a Digital Era

Especially in the digital information era a certain level of media criticism is more than appropriate. This appears certain, simply by assuming that social media facilitated and

propagated new ways of connection and sharing information (Van Heekeren, 2020). Regarding these new challenges in the digital environment each and every one is facing; it is indisputable that one has to be aware of how to evaluate information in a responsible manner. Media criticism here is more than mere critique and should be seen as an essential part of media literacy (Niesyto, 2019).

Yet, this adequate form of evaluation has to be distinguished from uncivil, populist accusations which seem to be a popular phenomenon on social media outlets. Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) even claim that the use of a so-called fake news label might gain currency in these new information environments.

It could be observed that this criticism often occurs in the form of anti-elitist arguments which are preferably employed by populist actors. Through severe criticism towards established systems namely scientists, political elites as well as mainstream media outlets they seek to divide society (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Engesser et al., 2017; Hameleers, 2020). A separation into two groups which do not allow any intersection in terms of interests or beliefs is one characteristic of populism. Society, portraying ordinary people is under control and at the mercy of political elites (Waisbord, 2018a).

Anti-elitist populist opinions now assume that information and explanations of complex issues by elites, like experts or politicians are simply not true. Populists solely appreciate information coming from ordinary citizens as the only truth possible. Additionally, it is claimed that political elites are closely collaborating with mainstream media outlets (Hameleers, 2020; Krämer, 2014). These views seem to have devastating effects. Waisbord (2018b) states „that it deepens worrisome trends in contemporary politics: intolerance, aversion to fact-grounded and reasoned debate, misinformation, and post-truth politics.“ (p. 34)

The world wide web and its social networks create the ideal environment for the spread of populist ideas and beliefs and is increasingly used to publish harsh anti-elitist criticism

(Engesser et al., 2017; Tong, 2018). It is now possible to reach a large audience without the filter of common gatekeepers (Neuberger & Quandt, 2009; Oswald, 2013).

Engesser et al., (2017) for instance, showed that especially social media settings seem to propagate populist criticism towards elites including traditional media outlets. Further, Müller et al. (2017) could observe that the appearance of populist messages might promote consent with these ideas. This should not be underrated as media criticism appears to increasingly stem from populist voices and even well-known politicians which is published through social media networks (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019). For example, it could be demonstrated that an instrumentalised application of the term fake news by Donald Trump might decrease trust in news media of those who supported Trump (Guess et al., 2017).

Having this in mind one might expect severe impacts of a fake news label not just on trust in news media but also on how people are capable of evaluating news media and further judge its credibility. In order to investigate this assumption, it is necessary to understand how the credibility of news messages are judged in general.

Judging Credibility

Regarding the complexity of the dissemination of fake news it is crucial to evaluate one's criteria for assessing the credibility of news content. The aim of this thesis will be to investigate solely the impact of fake news cues on the process of judging news media content. Yet, it is essential to understand other explanations on what judgements of credibility might be based on.

Characteristics of Content

Considering merely the characteristics of media messages, there are longstanding categories which define how recipients consider information credible based on specific content features. Fisher (2016) distinguishes three sections, which seem to interplay, namely "*message*

credibility, source credibility and media credibility” (p. 4). “*Message credibility*” refers solely to the content of messages, while “*source credibility*” is connected to the distributor and “*media credibility*” to the channel spreading these messages (Fisher, 2016, p.4). This classification and variations of it were initially defined for traditional mass media outlets. Even though it is rather complex to apply these categories in times of the world wide web and social media they still are a useful guidance (Fisher, 2016; Metzger et al., 2003).

Message credibility. It seems quite obvious to assume that the way of structuring and formatting news content may be instructive by evaluating its credibility. This includes linguistic, grammatical and orthographical features as well as the logic of arguments (Metzger et al., 2003; Stroud et al., 2017). Issues should be covered in a clear and complete manner to appear credible (Hamilton, 1998).

Source credibility. In order to assess information, it is also evident that its source seems to be of importance. Already in the 1950s a group around Carl Hovland at the Yale University focused on *source credibility* in their research. In this context, they claimed that the source of information appears especially credible if it seems to be trustworthy and shows a certain level of expertise (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995; Metzger et al., 2003).

This assumption formed the basis for an extensive research on the concept of *source credibility* which was further elaborated and expanded by various dimensions, like the attractiveness, friendliness or competence of the source. This can be observed in various ways (Metzger et al., 2003).

Transferring this concept to organisations their credibility is measured in a similar way. However, there are some other factors that might be relevant like prestige or their competitive position (Metzger et al., 2003; Vanden Bergh et al., 1981). For example, news content stemming from news organisation with a fine tradition, solid reputation or high journalistic ethics are perceived as more credible (Metzger et al., 2003).

Regarding websites it can be said that the way of design as well as the presentation of information seems to be important. This implies layout or graphic implementations. Sponsorship references might also have an impact on the way the integrity of the provided information is assessed (ibid.).

Media credibility. Here, the aim is to assess the credibility of the medium providing content. Initially, the focus was on newspapers and TV channels. In the era of social media, it gets evident that medium, source and message are difficult to delineate. (Metzger et al., 2003) Factors used to assess web credibility are diverse and seem to overlap with the established categories. Therefore, Metzger et al. (2003) mention further dimensions like „web-site credibility, web-site message credibility and internet/web credibility“ (pp. 313-315)

In the world wide web other forms of media coverage appeared which aims to uncover false information. Yet, so-called fact-checkers are judged regarding their credibility as well (Garrett et al., 2013; Stroud et al., 2017). It seems that fact-checking including images with reference to the initial misinformation, is more likely to be considered irrelevant. Berinsky (2015) further found that fact-checking coming from an unexpected source might be particularly effective. Next, it was demonstrated that fact-checking is more effective if there are exact explanations included of why the message is not correct. For example, if there is acceptable justification included about a phenomena (Nyhan & Reifler, 2015).

Information Process

Apart from these categories, which refer to the message, the source and the medium it is worth considering psychological factors within a recipient that could influence on how credibility is judged. Especially in the environment of social media it has become difficult to evaluate actual news information which is located between text, image and video content coming from friends and acquaintances (Ecker et al., 2010).

There are two possibilities of how the brain may process information. This can happen in a *systematic* or in a *heuristic* way. In the course of systematic processing the recipient evaluates messages regarding its argumentation. Whereas heuristic processing of information refers solely to superficial aspects responding to emotions. The manner of how information is assessed might be associated with the motivation or capacities of the individual. Nevertheless, social media appears to encourage a heuristic way of processing. The reason for this might be that content in social networks is in a constant competition in terms of their appearance. Yet, by pointing out that certain news stories may not be confirmed or come from less reliable authors this might result in a higher amount of systematic processing (Stroud et al., 2017).

Further, the concept of *message discrepancy* is relevant to understand if a message is considered credible. This refers to what extent received information differs from already existing information within the individual. If the correspondence is high the acceptance increases (Hamilton, 1998; Stroud et al., 2017). The so-called *illusory-truth effect* shows similar impacts. According to this approach information one has been exposed to before purports the illusion of truth regardless of the actual truthfulness (Begg et al., 1992; Stroud et al., 2017). A reoccurrence of content might simplify how the brain deals with the given information. Hence, familiar stories possible including false information may be processed in a heuristic way (Begg et al., 1992; Pennycook et al., 2018). Yet, Pennycook et al. (2018) found that the illusory truth effect cannot be applied to statements which are completely unbelievable as it should at least contain a minimum of plausibility. Further, the political ideology seems to be important as well as the illusory truth effect does not seem to appear if messages do not respond one's political orientation (Pennycook et al., 2018).

The Role of Social Identity

Next to these characteristics within the information content and the psychological disposition, it is important to consider, that humans as social beings tend to base their actions on

their social identity. In social media networks these effects strengthen as they provide enhanced possibilities for self-portrayal (Shin & Thorson 2017). If one consumes, likes, shares and ultimately believes information depends on so-called social cues (Metzger et al., 2010).

Therefore, it is possible that people are less willing to share information they even consider credible just because of normative beliefs. That might be because people attempt to avoid being judged by others (Marder et al., 2016).

This could be explained with the *theory of social identity*. According to this approach people tend to aim their action at their own social identity. In order to leave a good impression within social groups individuals are willing to base their actions on social standards (Trepete, 1995). A further explanation could be that individuals are prone to avoid inconvenient situations. Following the *prospect theory* one might carefully consider possible consequences before taking action (Levy, 1992).

Having these theoretical approaches in mind one might better understand how false information is treated by a broader public.

Media Criticism and Fake News Cues

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that perceiving critical statements against media reporting mostly stemming from politicians or other elites might influence if media messages are assessed credible (Ladd, 2010; Van Duyn & Collier, 2019).

Ladd, (2010) for instance, claims that trust in traditional news media declines partly because „media outlets have come under increasing criticism from politicians, activists and pundits.“ (p. 8). This could be due to steady development of media reporting through new sources like alternative media which are entering the information market (Ladd, 2010).

For example, Prochazka et al. (2018) could show that an uncivil style of user-commenting „had an unconditionally negative effect on the perceived formal quality of an article.“ (Prochazka et al., 2018, p.62). Consequently, one could assume that the term fake news as a

form of media criticism influences the way media audiences perceives the credibility of news content (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Tamul et al., 2020; Van Duyn & Collier, 2019).

Yet, academic discourse to address this matter is limited and controverse. For example, there is divergent evidence if fake news accusations coming from Donald Trump may impact perceptions of message credibility (Guess et al., 2017; Tamul et al., 2020).

The reason for this inconsistency might be due to little empiric treatment on this matter. Further, the main focus of academic research on the fake news label seems to be located on the north American region even though the fake news label appears to be a global phenomenon (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019).

Therefore, the consequences of a so-called fake news label need to be examined in various geographical contexts. Hence, it is an essential part of the empirical approach of this thesis to do so. Primarily, the influence of a fake news label on the capability of distinguishing fake and real information shall be investigated and what other causes might interplay.

It is suggested that this fake news label appears in the form of a media prime. Hence, it is important to understand the mechanisms of the media priming beforehand.

Priming and the Theory of Media Priming

In his article Peter (2002) emphasises that *media priming* just like the approaches of framing and agenda-setting has to be set into context with cognitive media effects. Yet, he further points out that an exclusive analysis of the concept of media priming is essential to perceive its complex nature. First of all, media priming can be associated with the psychological concept of priming, which provides its foundation. In this special case, media priming effects appear if certain media information makes existing knowledge accessible.

Already existing knowledge is thus activated through primes which occur in form of media information. As a consequence, messages following media primes might therefore be assessed based on the prior *activation* of already existing knowledge. However, such an

influence is solely possible if the information responds to the media prime. In addition, the time passed in between as well as the frequency of occurrence matters (ibid.).

Hence, the process is performed in two steps. At first, media primes simplify cognitive *accessibility* which promotes an activation of already existing knowledge. An *activation* assumes an *availability*, which means the existence of knowledge in the first place. Only in this way an accessibility to this latent knowledge is possible (Higgins, 1996). It is important to note that these effects do not appear unqualified. Peter (2002) determines three aspects that affect whether and to what extent media priming occur, namely recency, frequency and applicability.

Thus, it also matters when and how frequent prime appear as well as if they are applicable on subsequent information. Here, the individual assessment is equally important. One must consider this activated knowledge as relevant in order to apply it (ibid.). Following this, Hedberg and Higgins (2011) considered individual motivational concerns as equally relevant regarding the accessibility of knowledge.

However, the real effects of these media primes only get visible in a second step in which the activated knowledge gets applied in order to evaluate subsequent information because of a simplified accessibility of this knowledge. In order to understand this mechanism it is necessary to picture the brain as an associative network (Peter, 2002). After the reception of information activation tags help to connect various nodes representing concepts of knowledge in the semantic memory (Collins & Loftus, 1975).

With their groundbreaking work Iyengar and Kinder (1987) laid the foundation for a widespread attention of the media priming approach stating that „by calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged.“ (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 63). With this statement they strongly focus on media priming in a political context which seems to be the most popular research approach in this context. In particular, political priming has been mostly observed in the context of the United States and American presidents (Peter, 2002).

Research in other geographical areas is therefore required as well as other forms of priming needs to be taken into consideration (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Peter, 2002). Regarding this thesis the concept of persuasive priming shall be focalized in the context of the German-speaking area.

Peter (2002) further proposes to differentiate media priming between four thematic areas: political, violence-related, entertainment-related and persuasive media priming. While research on priming in a political contexts focusses on an impact on the perception of politicians, governments or political processes due to media primes (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) persuasive priming research attempts to investigate the evaluation of news content attached to priorly received primes (Schenk, 2007). Within persuasive priming these primes may appear in the form of media content. By mentioning details these primes activate knowledge and make it accessible for a subsequent evaluation of a persuasive target stimuli (Peter, 2002). Compared to the concepts of political and violence-related priming, research on persuasive priming is rare, yet it is an important area that should not be forgotten.

Van Duyn and Collier (2019), for example, could observe that people being exposed to discourse about fake news by elites are less capable of recognising real news articles as credible. The scholars here refer to the theory of media priming and state that this discourse serves as a media prime. Here the source of the discourse is also an important aspect as the fake news label is increasingly used by political elites. Zaller (1992), for instance, suggests that practically any information one receives originates from political elites, either directly or through a further source. This is because hardly anyone not belonging to various elites themselves is aware of special knowledge and expertise in multiple areas. According to Zaller (1992) elites include „politicians, higher-level government officials, journalists, some activists, and many kinds of experts and policy specialists.“ (p. 6). Information coming from elites may now influence the way we think. Zaller (1992) takes things even further by suggesting that „every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of the given

issue, and predisposition to motivate some conclusion about it.“ (Zaller, 1992, p.6). Information being produced by elites therefore implement priming effects (Van Duyn & Collier, 2019) insofar „the public responds to elite-supplied information and leadership cue.“ (Zaller, 1992, p.311).

Moderating Variables

In the research of media priming there is a constant quest for variables which may moderate possible priming effects though Peter (2000) points out that this is highly dependent on the subject matter of the respective research objective. This means that there is little sense in providing general assumptions about the influence of a particular variable. Hence, it is important that one constantly considers the individual approach of the present research interest which shall be respected as well in the course of this thesis.

Consequently, there is little consistent evidence on the influence of moderator variables on media priming effects. Peter (2000) argues that this might be because of various thematic approaches, as already mentioned. But also, a different way of operationalizing variables might contribute to inconclusive results. Nevertheless, there are two variables one seems to frequently encounter by dealing with media priming effects, namely trust in news media and political knowledge (ibid.).

However, different results on their effectiveness can be observed. For instance, in some studies an influence of political knowledge on priming effects was unverifiable while others report evidence in this matter (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Miller & Krosnick, 2000). In addition, Miller and Krosnick (2000) claim that political knowledge in conjunction with trust in news media seem to increasingly influence the impact of priming effects.

In sum, it can be said that general assumptions on moderator variables of media priming effects are difficult to make. Yet, trust in news media and political knowledge seem to be of relevance not just for media priming in general but also regarding the thematic issue of this

thesis. Hence, these two concepts shall be discussed in detail in terms of the importance for the topic as well as to investigate appropriate ways to measure these variables in order to consider them as possible moderators later on.

Trust in News Media

In modern societies trust is essential for a functioning community in all areas of social behaviour. (Seligman, 1997) It is increasingly difficult for individuals to understand the complexity of various global and local events. (Luhmann, 1979) Therefore, it is necessary, to trust in information received by others. This is important not just for oneself but for the entire society (Delhey et al., 2011). Good (2000), for example, declares that „without trust, the everyday social life which we take for granted is simply not possible.“ (p. 31).

Democratic Function of Trust in News Media

Coleman (2012) further emphasizes that without trust citizenship would be impossible. His assumption is based on the thought that

[...] citizenship only works on the basis of common knowledge and shared agreement about ways to live, citizens not only need to become informed themselves, but to trust that others around them are similarly civically informed.

(Coleman, 2012, p.36)

In the academic debate it is assumed that there are always two actors involved in the process of trust, namely the *trustor* and the *trustee* (Barrera, 2008). If one social actor places his trust in another social actor, this is based on an uncertainty of an action in the future, which is constantly associated with potential risks. Therefore, trust rests on an uncertain future and possible risks (Kohring & Matthes, 2007).

The trust the trustor places in the trustee should lead to positive effects. By applying this concept to news media, a news outlet would serve as the so-called trustee and its recipient as a

possible trustor. This means that trust in media reporting should have a positive impact on its trusting audiences and the entire society (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003; Van Duyn & Collier, 2019).

Trust in news media is crucial because citizenship is solely possible if there is a consent about knowledge. This only works if each and every one remains informed themselves but also relies on information provided by others. Thus, trusting news media outlets who intend to provide general knowledge is essential (Coleman, 2012). Important to mention here is that trust in news media solely refers to journalistic content waiving other kinds of communication like advertorial coverage (Kohring & Matthes, 2007).

Especially, in democratic societies it is important, that the citizen is able to trust news media coverage. That is because it is expected from citizens to make decisions based on a critical evaluation with relevant political issues. However, one might struggle with comprehending these issues in all their complexity. Therefore, the public has to be confident that information delivered by news media remains adequate (Bennett, 2012; Y. Tsfati & Cohen, 2005).

Coleman (2012) further divides trust in news media into two levels. The first essential level focusses on the fact that those producing news, perform their job properly. This means to periodically report veritable and accurate content in a clearly structured manner. The second level refers to an agreement between news producers and recipients regarding their conception of the realisation of news reporting. For democratic systems it is necessary that the expectations of news production values of the producers correspond with those of the recipients. Media reporting can solely be evaluated, as far as a benchmark for orientation exists (Coleman et al., 2012).

Media Skepticism

It seems that trust is widely discussed in social sciences and the academic debate. On the contrary, the concept of media distrust appears to remain overlooked (Kim & Ahmad, 2013;

Ladd, 2010; Tsfati, 2003). Nevertheless, distrust in news media has to be recognised and named as a concept to make a scientific discourse possible.

Tsfati and Cappella (2003) therefore chose to use the term *media skepticism* over other expressions like media cynicism as an appropriate term to describe „a subjective feeling of mistrust toward the mainstream news media.“ (p. 506).

This feeling requires a certain skepticism not only towards traditional news outlets but also towards professional journalists themselves. A media sceptic would accuse the journalist of neglecting his professional requirements by following his individual interests or profit from his style of reporting. Just like the concept of trust media, skepticism is a complex phenomenon. Here, several components come together including mistrust in the veracity of published content as well as a lack of confidence in the professional practice of journalists. In other words, sceptics assume that journalists simply neglect professional standards like, for instance, objectivity (ibid.).

Tsfati and Cappella (2003) emphasize here that skepticism is an individually perceived feeling. Hence, even media that meets the standard requirements from an objective point of view can be treated skeptically. Assuming now that trust placed into another actor has positive impacts, it is obvious that one mistrusting another is expected to imply negative effects. As a result, one is less willing to interact with the source of mistrust. Regarding media reporting this would mean a decrease of attention towards mistrusted news sources (ibid.).

A further interesting aspect is that trust in news media seems to be linked to the political orientation. It can be observed that in the European context populism might lead to distrust in news media. In the US, it seems that republicans tend to rather distrust mainstream media outlets (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Guess et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2018).

In 2003, Tsfati and Cappella have shown that media sceptics tend to turn to alternative sources while still consuming traditional news media. In the digital age, sources next to

conventional media are countless. The result may be an increased confusion of facts (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019).

Hence, if a low level of trust in news media might lead to a higher acceptance of alternative sources it seems plausible to investigate if the impact of a fake news label is also associated to trust in news media.

Trust in Digital News Media and a Post-Truth Society

The rise of the internet and its broad acceptance, just like every new medium, affects different areas of society (Eastin, 2001; Liu, 2003). Thus, the advent of the world wide web lead to a revival of the scientific discourse about credibility, which was already highly relevant in the 1980s. Due to the fact that traditional media outlets started providing information online as well, a debate about credibility became necessary again (Garrison, 2003; Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008; Lu & Andrews, 2006; Wathen & Burkell, 2002).

This can also be connected to the fact that by the end of the 1990s the internet offered a range of new possibilities of news distribution not just for traditional media outlets but also for the individual. Anonymity and an easy access made it possible for every user besides traditional media outlets to disseminate content (Eastin, 2001; Fogg, 2003; Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008; Lu & Andrews, 2006). This development may not only have positive impacts, as it leads to a fast spread of false information which remain accessible in the world wide web (Eastin, 2001).

Hence, the result is a conflict between online sources and traditional media outlets as provider of information (Metzger, 2003). Already in 2002, scholars recognized that the web as a news distributor will gain importance and it has been pointed out very soon that this may affect media reporting (Abdulla et al., 2002).

In the user-generated environment of the world wide web new opportunities of participation made it common for citizens to share, produce and comment information content. In the

era of social networks they got enabled as so-called citizen journalists to actively participate in various ways (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil De Zúñiga, 2017; Bachmann et al., 2012).

Carpenter (2010) defines the online citizen journalist as „an individual who intends to publish information online meant to benefit a community“ (p. 1064). Based on this contributions citizen journalists offer a new variety of news sources (ibid.).

Further, it appears that citizen journalism not solely exists next to traditional journalism. Citizen journalism rather influences and interacts with traditional journalism. News content of conventional media outlet, for example, gets selected, filtered and commented by citizens. Next to this, professional journalists tend to act differently from what they were used to. In social networks it has become usual for professional journalists to actively engage with their audience through likes, shares or retweets (Hermida et al., 2012; Holton et al., 2013).

Thus, Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil De Zúñiga (2017) raised the question if trust in news media changes due to the emergence of social networks because according to them „social media can be a source for mainstream and citizen-created news, but also for hybrid information containing the attributes of both.“ (p. 705).

These new trends within the internet are often associated with a broader circulation of fake news. This uncertainty of reliance may further result in a general decline in trust in news media (Lazer et al., 2018; McNair, 2017; Nielsen & Graves, 2017b).

Measuring Trust

In face of the previously outlined changes of the media system the concept of trust in news media is an important variable not solely for scientific discourse but also for journalistic practice and democracy as a whole. Due to a vast amount of perspectives about the components of trust in news media it is hard to provide a generally accepted definition (Fisher, 2016). Following an intensive research, it seems apparent that merely asking if one trusts or mistrusts is insufficient.

Kohring and Matthes (2007) claim that trust placed in media reporting always involves certain risks. This is because news media is as well incapable to provide complete information about relevant issues and events. It is therefore up to the media to conscientiously select information regarding their impact on giving access to the complexity of modern societies to a broader public. Hence, they assume that trust in news media rests on trust in a proper selection process by media producers (Kohring & Matthes, 2007).

This selectivity is stressed by Kohring and Matthes (2007) because in their opinion in many cases solely the concept of media credibility is used to assess one's trust in news media which they consider as insufficient. According to them an evaluation of media credibility excludes the theory of journalism. In order to reasonable operationalise trust in news media with the aim of connecting the theory of journalism with sociological approaches of trust they developed a multidimensional scale of trust.

In the course of this thesis this shall be used as it still provides a comprehensible and extensive model for operationalization. It was chosen as it appears to be well elaborated, even though a rapid progress in journalistic reporting due to digitization might permanently change the perception of trust in news media.

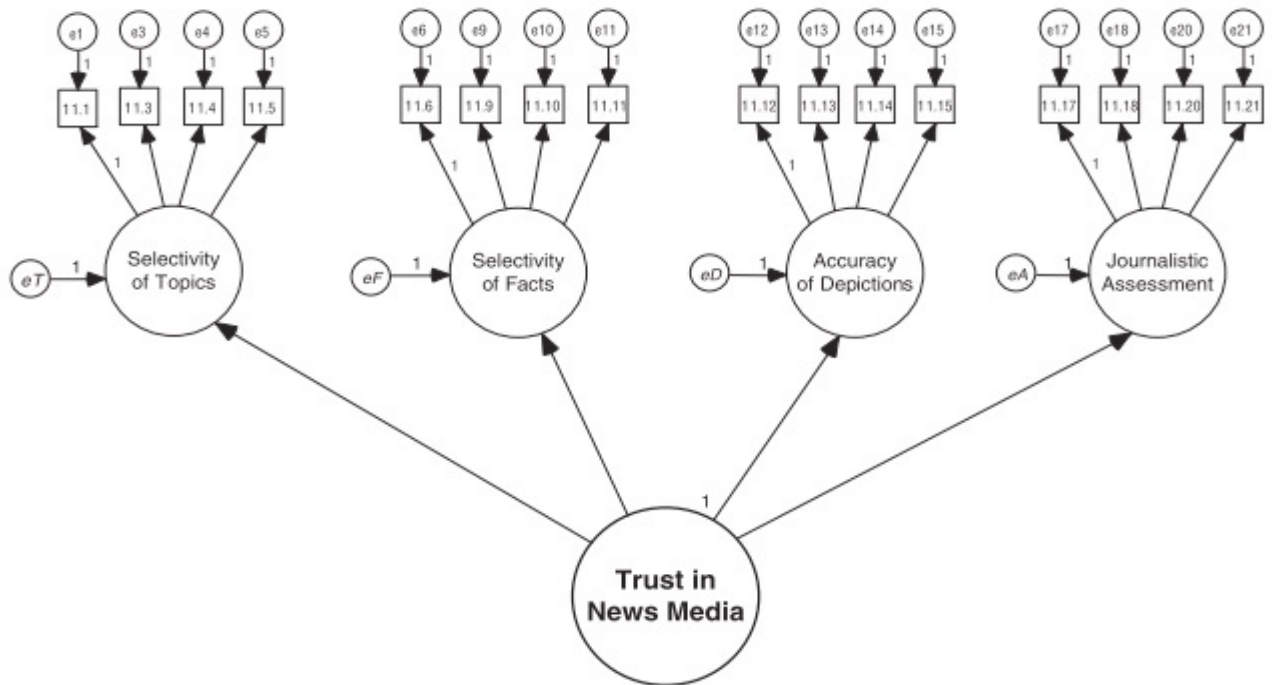
To make this latent and difficult observable variable trust in news media now measurable Kohring and Matthes (2007) made use of a hierarchical factor analysis. In doing so their attempt was to measure the second-order factor *trust in news media* by showing a correlation of four first-order factors (Bollen, 1989). They have therefore set up four dimensions, which ought to constitute *trust in news media*, namely „*trust in the selectivity of topics*“, „*trust in the selectivity of facts*“, „*trust in the accuracy of depictions*“, and „*trust in journalistic assessment*“ (Kohring & Matthes, 2007, p.240f). These four descriptive dimensions should hence make it possible to observe the higher-order factor trust in news media. Each of them is based on four variables allowing to measure these latent first factors (ibid.).

„*Trust in the selectivity of Topics*“: This aspect refers to the trust in the news provider that the chosen topics are worth the attention. It is measured by four variables focusing on the perception of the audience if these topics are sufficiently covered.

„*Trust in the selectivity of Facts*“: Here the focus is on the facts used to present selected issues. This dimension is based on variables examining if these facts are diverse, understandable and relate to the topic.

„*Trust in the Accuracy of Depictions*“: The emphasis here is solely placed on whether a reported statement is demonstrable true or untrue including four variables for investigation.

„*Trust in Journalistic Assessment*“: The process of selection itself implies an assessment of relevant topics and content. However, media reporting may include a critical examination of issues which influences the ways they are presented. On the basis of four variables it should be observed if this is realized in an adequate manner (Kohring & Matthes, 2007, pp. 240-242).

Figure 1*Modified Measurement Model “Trust in News Media”**Note:* From Kohring, M., & Matthes, J. (2007, p. 244)

Political Knowledge

Unlike other concepts, science, more precisely political science, does not offer a consistent approach on how to measure *political knowledge*. In addition, the concept has long been overlooked in empirical investigations (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993).

Democratic Function of Political Knowledge

Yet, disregarding the concept of political knowledge can be crucial. This gets obvious if one considers the significance of political knowledge for representative democracies. On the basis of rational considerations citizens are expected to participate with their vote in important

decisions on the political system. It is necessary that enough information for an evaluation is available to do this in a reasonable manner (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993; Maravall, 1999).

The right to vote does not directly imply an equality of citizens in a democratic system. Therefore, political information is the fundamental basis for influencing and participating in political activities. Grönlund & Milner (2006), for instance, remarked that a low level of political knowledge could be linked to a decline of voter turnout.

Hence, relevant political information is necessary so that voters are able to evaluate elites and their actions. The market of information is certainly complex. According to democratic theorists, one might recognize a difficult relation between citizens and political elites. This is due to the fact that political elites may quite possibly influence if and how political information is published (Grönlund & Milner, 2006; Maravall, 1999).

Observing political knowledge is a difficult task. Grönlund and Milner (2006) state that political knowledge is often equated with political information, which they consider insufficient. The concept is much more extensive because it implies a cognitive process. In particular, political information has to be evaluated and interpreted in order to represent political knowledge (Grönlund & Milner, 2006; Sartori, 1987). However, the presence of political information constitutes the basis of political knowledge (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993; Luskin, 1987).

Barabas and Jerit (2009) note that in this context individual factors are of vital importance. Race, gender, education and income may have an impact on political knowledge. It could be observed that a high socio-economic status provides a solid basis to generate political knowledge. Higher educated people may also obtain future information more accurately. On the contrary, a lower level of education has the opposite effect (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993; Jerit et al., 2006).

Another important aspect is that the degree of impact of education on political knowledge seems to differ between egalitarian and inegalitarian societies. For example, in

inegalitarian systems political education appears to be less relevant. Grönlund and Milner (2006) justify these differences between countries with various economic redistribution as well as different electoral systems. Hence, they argue that education might be an especially important aspect of political knowledge in majoritarian systems.

Assuming political knowledge can be traced back solely to socio-economic conditions is insufficient. Hence, political scientists increasingly consider environmental links in the context of political knowledge. For example, Hutchings (2001) claims that the environment of work as well as the relevancy of topics for a specific social group are vital as well. These conditions may influence one's level of political knowledge (Jerit et al., 2006).

Additionally, it is necessary to further observe how media consumption influences political knowledge and the role of education in this matter and its connection to news consumption. It makes sense to assume that the media delivers current political information to a broader audience (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993). Therefore, political knowledge based on political information might be connected to news media consumption. Further, this assumption may be applied the other way around as well. For example, one could expect that those showing a certain level of political knowledge might rather turn towards political news information. This means that subsequently, political knowledge impacts media consumption behaviour. (Neuman, 1986). The reason here may be that political knowledge simplifies the reception and interpretation of information (Eveland et al., 2005).

In a post-truth society this is essential as within a vast variety of information one might face problems by organizing facts. This is an important aspect within this thesis as political knowledge may affect the way information and facts are understood and interpreted (Eveland et al., 2005). Hence, it shall be evaluated as well how political knowledge is related to the evaluation of news articles.

Measuring Political Knowledge

In measuring political knowledge different approaches could be observed. For example, Grönlund and Milner (2006) defined two categories of political information, which are vital to be reasonable applied in democratic participation. The first one refers to political information about the principles of political systems. The other category focusses on recent political issues. These include information about current political events, specific actors, parties or ideologies. (ibid.)

Regarding political behaviour, engagement and knowledge, apparent differences between gender are frequently discussed in political science. Mondak and Anderson (2004) stressed that within the conception of gender binary the so-called knowledge gap between men and women seems to be especially high. Like other scholars they conclude that this is due to differences in socialization and the process of learning political information. Yet, they mentioned an exciting aspect in this context. Based on their assumption an observed gap in political knowledge might be traced back to the practice of measuring political knowledge. Assuming that men are more likely to guess if they are uncertain while women tend to choose the response option „don't know“ there may be more relevant data for further analysis available for male respondents. This could give a distorted picture of the actual political knowledge of women compared to men (Mondak & Anderson, 2004).

In order to avoid an imbalance between guessing and consciously chosen „don't know“ options this issue should be taken in account when operationalizing the variable political knowledge.

Following this analysis, it seems that political knowledge is not merely important for democratic systems but also for research in media priming effects (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993; Peter, 2002). This is why political knowledge shall be paid particular consideration to in this thesis.

Replication of the survey of Van Duyn and Collier

After this theoretical discussion regarding the issue of fake news the scientific interest of this thesis, namely an investigation of possible *priming effects* of the *fake news label* on the *capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles* is plausible.

In 2017, Van Duyn and Collier (2019) already examined this question. The researchers showed “that exposure to elite discourse about fake news leads to lower levels of trust in media and less accurate identification of real news.” (Van Duyn and Collier, 2019, p.29) In terms of the correct evaluation of fake news no influence could be observed. It was argued that these findings appear due to a priming effect. It is further demonstrated that this elite discourse has more impact on media trust than mere exposure to fake news articles and that political ideology does not seem to be linked to these priming effects. Their survey revealed exciting findings which underline the severe impact of a fake news label on the subjective perception of news information (ibid.).

Hence, after an intense evaluation of the topic of fake news some parts of the study have to be questioned. At first, in order to generalize such results, it is necessary to observe the phenomenon in various geographic contexts and among different populations. Research on fake news and the fake news label is limited and strongly focused on the US American context even though it can be considered as globally recognized (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019).

Due to rhetorical differences the fake news label might have different effects in the German-speaking area. Next, it may be that in 2020 the public understanding regarding fake news has changed as well. It should further be considered to reformat the presented news articles in a more neutral and anonymous way in order to avoid bias regarding references to the source and the appearance of the message. Moreover, it seems reasonable to also include fake news articles which are not completely false but rather low in facticity to provide a more accurate reflection of reality.

Even more importantly, however, after this theoretical analysis of media priming it seemed to be an obvious assumption to observe if *trust in news media* and *political knowledge* moderate these priming effects. Even though Van Duyn and Collier (2019) included these variables they did not take them into account as possible moderators. Also, the operationalization of media trust appeared to be insufficient.

These conditions emphasized the need to replicate the study in order to reveal whether the theory of media priming can be generalized in that sense. In the following, the benefits of a conceptual replication in this context as well as the general value for scientific research shall be illustrated.

Replication in science

Already Turkey (1969) stressed that in order to approve knowledge it has to be reconstructed because „any attempt to avoid this statement leads to failure and more probably to destruction.“ (p. 84). In the academic field this confirmation of knowledge can be carried out through replication studies, in which already conducted studies are reproduced in order to test initial empirical evidence and reproducibility (Döring, 2015).

Yet, in scientific discourse control of empirical evidence in the form of replication studies has not been recognized for a long time. For example, Makel et al. (2012) were able to determine that in psychology only rather few studies are explicitly labelled as replication studies and even less are in fact of this sort. Even today it is considered as poorly elaborated even though such an interpretation is completely wrong (Schmidt, 2009; Standing et al., 2014).

Although there is little attention for replication studies, they are of vital importance to understand scientific evidence of experimental studies or as Popper (1959, p.45) puts it:

[...] only by such repetitions can we convince ourselves that we are not dealing with a mere isolated „coincidence“, but with events which, on account of their regularity and reproducibility, are in principle inter-subjectively testable.

Popper (1959, p.45)

In metascience questions of reproducibility are already recognized and respected. (Fidler & Wilcox, 2018) Hence, if reproducibility now presents a quality factor of scientific research it can be concluded that replication has to be performed (Standing et al., 2014).

The practice of replication was initially popular in natural sciences. Physicists, for example, aimed to observe through reconstructing the exact procedure if the process of research was reasonable early on. In social science this might be more complex. Various variables, differing ways of operationalization, changes of environment, circumstances and study population may influence the outcomes of experimental investigations. Especially this demonstrates the importance of replication in social science in order to expand knowledge. Even though it is obvious that due to minimal changes in the study design, results may not be reconstructed, confirmed and non-confirmed replication studies are highly valuable for scientific practice (Madden, 1992).

Replication Crisis

In psychology one speaks of a so-called crisis of replication. This has to be traced back to a trend in social sciences to preferably publish significant over non-significant evidence. This urge to deliver positive results has crucial side effects which show again the importance of replication (Fanelli, 2010; Nosek & Lakens, 2014).

At first it can be assumed that negative evidence just remains unpublished and won't be accessible to a larger audience. This is called the file drawer problem or publication bias (Standing et al., 2014).

Next, if researchers aim to solely publish positive evidence misinterpretation might be incited. This results in an inaccurate display of supposed significant results due to false positives (Maxwell et al., 2015). Further, with the help of p-hacking questionable significant empirical evidence can be pushed by subsequent changes of the research design (Nosek & Lakens, 2014).

It is also important to mention, that replications are most successful if they are performed by the initial research team. The reason for this might be an experimenter bias (Makel et al., 2012). This underlines the need of a variation of researchers in replicating studies.

The problem of replication in science is not limited to psychology but rather an issue of social sciences in general (Freese & Peterson, 2017). However, in scientific practice replication studies have still not been deemed necessary. They do certainly appear but often are not labelled as such. Hence, the specific conditions of substantial replications have to be clarified (Schmidt, 2009).

Conceptual Replication

A distinction can be made between direct and conceptual replication. While direct replication can be seen as an explicit imitation of the original study conceptual replication aims to reveal if the theoretic foundation of the experiment can be generalized. Hence, hypotheses are tested in a different experimental setting. Conceptual replications have to be differentiated from follow-up studies as it involves an independent examination of the underlying theory. Under the principle of heterogeneity of irrelevance different aspects of the research design or the study population are changed in order to test if evidence can be generalized (Schmidt, 2009).

If replications further mention possible moderating variables which might affect the significance of results, one might speak of extensions of replications. These observations have to be considered as definitely profitable for scientific research as they provide new empirical evidence (Bonett, 2012).

It can be summarized that although replication has not been extensively respected in science they are of high importance and might propagate more proper research methods if scholars expect their studies to be replicated (Bonett, 2012). Even Standing et al. (2014) suggest that it is reasonable for graduate students to perform replication studies in order to practice and learn scientific practice.

Yet, a limitation of a conceptual replication is that if the procedure fails, it is hard to detect its substantial cause. Different populations, changes in operationalization or material might influence the outcome as well as errors in the research process of the genuine survey. The main purpose of the conceptual replication remains in testing the underlying theory in order to generalize it (Schmidt, 2009). Nevertheless, a conceptual replication seems appropriate regarding this thesis as the aim of the experiment will be to test the presented theory, namely the approach of media priming.

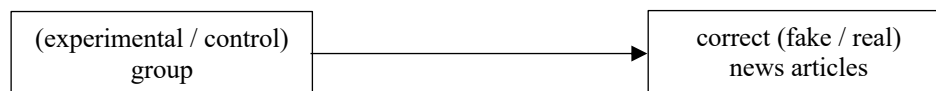
Hypotheses

Since a conceptual replication with an extension is performed, it is necessary to formulate similar hypotheses in order to examine whether the underlying theory can be applied if the geographical context, population and the research design was adapted. Hence, the first hypothesis shall be posed in such a manner that the scientific claims of the survey of Van Duyn and Collier (2019) can be tested.

H1: Priming through a fake news label leads to a lower capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.

Figure 2

Path diagram of moderation analysis for H1



H1a: Priming through a fake news label leads to a lower capacity of evaluating fake news articles.

H1b: Priming through a fake news label leads to a lower capacity of evaluating real news articles.

Subsequently, taking up on the findings of Van Duyn and Collier (2019) it shall be observed if the priming process is moderated by further variables. As already discussed in the theoretical section, general assumptions are hard to make and scientific evidence on moderating variables in the context of priming is inconsistent. Yet, trust in news media as well as political knowledge seem to be both relevant for media priming in general as well as the thematic approach of this thesis. Hence, those variables shall be observed as possible moderators in the form of an undirected hypothesis as the aim is to solely investigate whether a moderating effect exists in the first place.

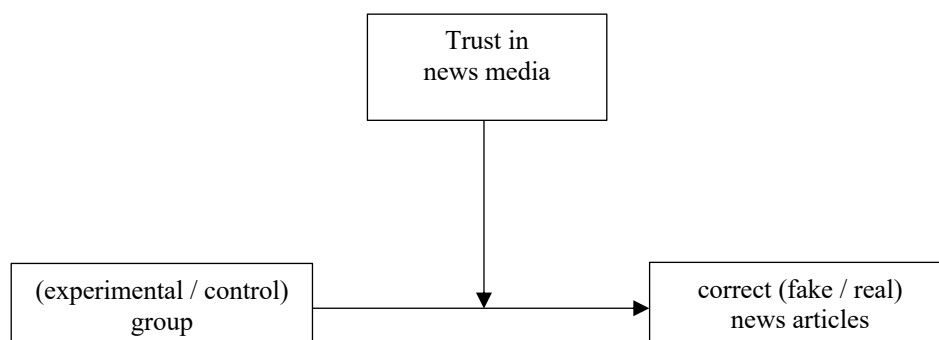
As already explained in detail a low level of trust in news media may result in a higher acceptance of alternative news sources which may also include false information (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003; Tsfati, 2003).

Therefore, it is assumed that trust in news media affects the way how news articles are evaluated and might be involved in the process of media priming.

H2: Trust in news media moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.

Figure 3

Path diagram of moderation analysis for H2



H2a: Trust in news media moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating fake news articles.

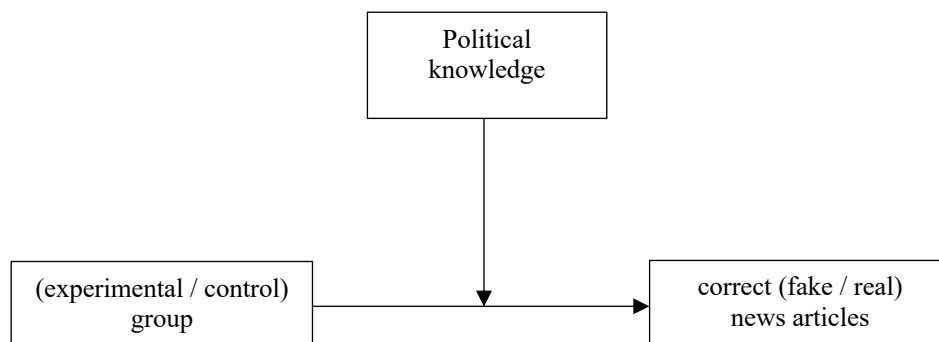
H2b: Trust in news media moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating real news articles.

Another important variable in this aspect is political knowledge. Assuming political knowledge might be connected to news consumption habits the level of political knowledge may have an impact on the evaluation of news articles (Delli Carpini, 2000; Neuman, 1986).

H3: Political knowledge moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.

Figure 4

Path diagram of moderation analysis for H3



H3a: Political knowledge moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating fake news articles.

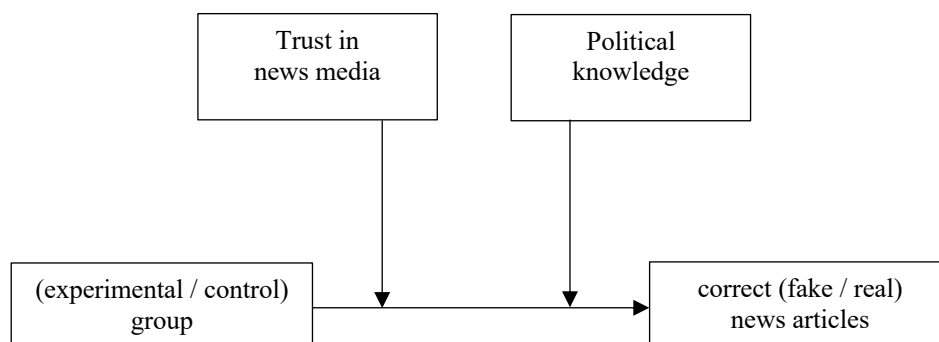
H3b: Political knowledge moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating real news articles.

Further, it shall be observed if trust in news media and political knowledge affects the effect of priming through a fake news label. Following Miller and Krosnick (2000) it is important to consider both variables at the same time, as there might be a connection in the moderating effect.

H4: Trust in news media and political knowledge moderate the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.

Figure 5

Path diagram of moderation analysis for H4



H4a: Trust in news media and political knowledge moderate the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating fake news articles.

H4b: Trust in news media and political knowledge moderate the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating real news articles.

Method Section

Overview

By choosing the specific method a quantitative analysis in the form of an experiment was considered as appropriate as it seems to be the usual way of investigating persuasive media priming effects (Peter, 2002). Furthermore, experiments appear to be the common approach to examine cause-effect relations which was the initial aim of this empirical analysis (Koch et al., 2019). More precisely, the purpose was to observe possible influences of political knowledge and trust in media on possible priming effects of a fake news label and evaluation of news articles.

The experiment was realized in the form of a conceptual replication with an extension. At this point it shall be noted once again that the research design in its essential features was adopted by the study of Van Duyn and Collier (2019). Yet, some changes regarding the material, the study population and the geographical context have been made. In addition, the variables trust in news media and political knowledge have been operationalized in a different manner. This approach corresponds the nature of conceptual replications. Any modification has been made with great diligence.

In order to collect an adequate amount of data in a timely manner a quantitative method in form of an online experiment was chosen. The data was gathered by means of the survey software SoSci Survey and the period of investigation lasted from 21.12.2020 until 07.01.2021. The survey was conducted in German language.

Procedure

The experimental procedure in this thesis can be divided into two steps, which are the actual experiment and a previously performed pre-test. The purpose was to prematurely reveal and eliminate potential errors in the research design. The way this has been developed shall be outlined in the following.

Experimental Procedure

In the course of a between subject design the participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental or a control group. After giving consent both groups had to answer a set of sociodemographic questions referring their age, gender, educational status and media consumption habits. Next, each participant had to respond to further questions in order to collect information regarding their perceived *trust in news media* and *political knowledge*.

Following that, members of each group were exposed to a respective set of eight tweets. The content of the tweets in both groups were entirely fictitious. The experimental group received tweets accusing media outlets of lying and spreading false information or fake news indicating a fake news label, whereas the control group obtained tweets stemming from the same Twitter Accounts but containing content which was not referring to the credibility of news reporting but current political issues. In order to appear authentic and up-to-date especially issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic were chosen.

Subsequently, the participants of both groups were randomly exposed to the same four articles, including two fake and two real news articles. After receiving each article, they were asked about how credible they perceived the presented information and how confident they felt about their assessments.

At the end of the experiment an extensive debriefing was provided to all participants revealing the real intention of the study. Information regarding the pure fiction of the tweets and the originality of the articles provided was offered.

Pre-Test

In order to ensure a valid and reliable evaluation the survey instruments were tested in advance in the course of a pretest. It was taken into consideration that this test included cognitive testing methods as this seems to be an important part in verifying if the proposed questions were formulated either well understandable and appealing (Collins, 2003).

The „Zwei-Phasen Pretesting“ process developed by Prüfer & Rexroth (2000) was used as a guideline for conducting the pretest. Despite difficult conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was attempted to carry the testing out in an adequate manner. The aim was to evaluate if the experiment was reasonable designed. Further the pretesting should provide information on which articles shall be considered as relevant for the actual experiment. Prüfer and Rexroth (2000) separated the process of pretesting in two steps, which should be based on cognitive techniques as well as a standardized testing. Following this concept, a pretest in two phases was performed.

Face-to-Face Interview: After designing the experiment, the questionnaire as well as the articles were tested in a face-to-face interview situation. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic only three people from the close social environment of the researcher were able to attend the testing. It was attempted that no preliminary information about the research aim was revealed beforehand. The respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire in an analogue manner and loudly express thoughts regarding the comprehensibility and practicability. This has been achieved by using cognitive techniques like probing, think aloud and paraphrasing. Further, more articles than planned for the actual experiment were presented in order to identify those with the most correct assessments. In this first step first errors could be detected and remedied. These involved mistakes regarding orthography, mode of expression and grammar as well as details within the tweets (content, likes and dates). The formulation of the questions was considered as reasonable and comprehensible by the respondents.

Online pretest: After this first evaluation of the experiment, it was pretested again in its final digital version in order to examine the technical implementation of the experiment. In addition, further details could be observed which may have been influenced through the attendance of the researcher. It was also possible to assess whether the adaptations after the first pretest were appropriate. The pretest was conducted via the survey software SoSci-Survey. The respondents were able to add comments to the survey design. Here as well, the questioning was perceived as adequate and convenient. However, errors in the conception of the randomization could be detected and solved.

It has been shown that the pretesting was a very important part in designing the experiment as essential details which might have been missed out by the researcher could be adapted in advance. In order to create reliable and valid survey instruments this was essential.

Sample

Participants were recruited on social network platforms as this seemed to be particularly efficient. Basically, every German-speaking person with access to the link leading to the experiment could take part. The link was spread in various groups with particular attention to address a broad range of different participants outside the cluster of fellow students. In order to capture appropriate and comprehensive data it was solely possible to finish the experiment if all questions were answered. Ultimately, only cases which finished the experiment and perceived the debriefing were taken into consideration. People unwilling to give their consent were not able to participate in the first place. Besides, the average time of stay on each page of the experiment was observed in order to detect discrepancies. In this matter, there were no conspicuous cases located in the present sample.

Ultimately the sample ($N = 187$) was aged between 19 and 55 years with an average age of 24.49 ($SD = 4.3$) years including 69% female and 29.9% male participants. 1.1% did not provide any information on their gender (see Table B1; Table B2; Figure B1). Regarding the level of education, one could observe that the majority of the interviewees stated to have completed the „Matura “ or higher education. (AHS: 25.1%; BHS: 15.0%; Lehre mit Matura: 3.2%; Bachelor / Bakkalaureat: 39.6%; Master / Magister / Diplom Ingenieur: 13.9%) (see Table B3).

After examining the socio-demographic factors of the sample it got obvious that in comparison to the Austrian population it cannot be considered as representative as there are various differences.

In 2018, 50.8% of the Austrian population were female and 44 years old whereas 49,2% were male with an average age of 41,4 years. The younger population in Austria seems to be balanced regarding gender (Statistik Austria, 2020). The sample could not reflect these characteristics as the majority of the younger participants was female (see Figure B2). Regarding the level of education 19,2% of the Austrian women and 15,9% men are holding a university degree in 2018 (Statistik Austria, 2020). The sample on the contrary shows a higher level of university

graduates, with 49,6% female and 62,5% male cases (see Table B4). Therefore, neither socio-demographic characteristics regarding age, gender or education of the Austrian population could be represented by our sample.

According the habits of media news consumption of the participants, a trend towards online news sources could be observed. (86.6%: Zeitungen online; 81.3%: Soziale Netzwerke) (see Table B6).

Materials / Measures

The operationalization of the variables as well as the conception of the material was based on either the survey of Van Duyn and Collier (2019) as well as on the theoretical framework presented in this paper. The exact design will be presented hereafter.

Trust in news media

As already presented in detail in the theoretical section measuring trust in news media is difficult to put into practice. Trust in news media can be defined as a latent variable which seems to be caused by different factors. Therefore, solely asking whether one trusts, or mistrusts media reporting is considered insufficient in order to operationalise the variable.

Hence, the concept of observing trust in news media provided by Matthes and Kohring (2007) was used. Their aim was to make the second-order factor trust in news media measurable by means of four first-order factors through a hierarchical factor analysis. These four factors were referring to „trust in the selectivity of topics“, „trust in the selectivity of facts“, „trust in the accuracy of depictions“, and „trust in journalistic assessment“ (Kohring & Matthes, 2007, pp. 240-241).

In order to measure these categories, the participants were requested to read four statements corresponding to every factor making in total 16 statements referring to the perceived trust in news media of the participants. After reading each of them they had to provide information on how much they agree with this statement which was measured on a 4-point Likert scale with an external option for those who did not want to give any information. The participants were able to choose between different response options, namely „Stimme überhaupt nicht zu“, „Stimme nicht zu“, „Stimme zu“, „Stimme voll und ganz zu“ or as well „Keine Angabe“. This form was chosen to avoid an error of central tendency by not forcing the respondents to answer as the aim was to identify their subjective feeling of trust in news media.

The statements were directly transferred from the model of Kohring und Matthes (2007). However, the presented phrases in the survey included no references to recent political issues but were rather expressed in a more general way. In the course of the conception of the experimental design this appeared to be an appropriate implementation of the model. The purpose was to avoid possible bias as the variable trust in news media was surveyed prior to the stimuli. Furthermore, it was intended to obtain information regarding trust in news media in general. Being aware of difficulties in collecting general opinions about trust in news media especially in the digital information age this seemed to be the most reasonable approach in doing so.

In order to check its reliability, the internal consistency of the 16 statements which were used to measure the latent variable trust in news media was tested with Cronbach's Alpha. A good level of internal consistency could be shown indicating that the items were accurately chosen and the instrument to measure trust in news media was reliable. (16 Items; $\alpha = .890$) All items have been used, as there has not been any evidence that leaving out a specific item would decrease the value of Cronbach's Alpha (see Table B5).

In order to better illustrate the extent of trust in news media the variable was grouped into three sections, namely *low level of trust in news media* (≤ 1.5), *average level of trust in news media* (> 1.5 and ≤ 2.5), *high level of trust in news media* (> 2.5).

52.9% of the respondents demonstrated an *average level* of trust in news media whereas 25.1% showed a *low level* and 21.9% a *high level* of trust in news media (see Table B7). These findings are not surprising if one has in mind the outcome of the Digital Reuters News Report in 2020. Here, it was demonstrated that trust in news media increased by 1,0% which is an interesting observation as trust in news media appeared to constantly decrease since 2017. (Gadringer et al., 2020)

Yet, a difference between trust in online news sources and news on social networks could be observed. The Digital Reuters News Report, for instance, demonstrated that 39,8% of the users of online news sources and 46,3% of the users of social networks online in Austria

fear not being capable to distinguish facts from false information. This shows that there is a certain lack of confidence especially towards information on social networks (ibid.).

Similar conclusions could be recorded among the given sample. Hence, trust in news media amongst those who consume online newspapers (55.6% average level; 21.6% high level) seemed to be slightly higher than amongst social network users (52.6% average level; 20.4% high level) (see Table B8; Table B9).

Political knowledge

Similarly, no standardized way of measuring political knowledge could be detected. Therefore, following Grönlund & Milner (2006) political knowledge about political information was separated into two sections. In total, there were five questions posed in order to monitor political knowledge.

One part of the questions referred to generally valid factual knowledge about political practice. The other part included issues about currencies in the political context. This implied that respondents are willing to follow up with political topics. The questions were phrased in such a way that they referred to factual knowledge about politics in Austria and the EU. It was taken into consideration that the participants had to choose between one correct and further false questions. It was deliberately intended to provide no response option to state not to know the answer in order to force the participants to guess in this case. The reason for this was to avoid (gender specific) willingness to guess which some individuals appear to rather demonstrate (Mondak & Anderson, 2004).

Knowing that forced answers might be perceived as unpleasant for the respondent this was especially respected in the pretest. The question was implemented in such a manner as none of the participants of the pretest has negatively addressed the formulation of the question.

Correct answers suggested a higher level of political knowledge whereas false answers were interpreted as a lower level of political knowledge. As it may be assumed that even those

with a high level of political knowledge may not be able to answer all answers correctly the count variable political knowledge was grouped into three categories, namely those with *low level* of political knowledge (correct answers < 3), those with an *average level* of political knowledge (correct answers = 3) and those with a *high level* of political knowledge (correct answers > 3)

The sample was located somewhere between a *low level* (40.6%) and an *average level* (25.1%) of political knowledge (see Table 10). No significant differences could be shown regarding the gender of the participants (male / female). Yet, a tendency of a lower level of political knowledge amongst female participants was visible.

Tweets

In order to indicate a fake news label, the subjects were respectively exposed to a set of eight tweets. The tweets of the experimental group were supposed to reflect a fake news label whereas those of the control group contained information on a totally different issue, namely the COVID 19 pandemic due to its currency.

Information on the presented Twitter accounts like usernames or profile pictures were purely fictional. The purpose was to give the impression that these tweets were stemming from real elites, more precisely people of public interest. Thus, it was taken into consideration to label the Twitter Accounts with blue badges which indicates verified users on the platform Twitter. Further, it was necessary to ensure that the chosen usernames were not referring to actual well-known personalities in the German speaking area. Nevertheless, it was strived to give the impression of real people. The profile pictures of these Twitter accounts were obtained from websites providing license-free images. Here again, it was respected that selected images appeared to be portraying people of public interest. In order to give a genuine impression, the selection was based on an extensive observation of the characteristics of members of the Austrian Twitter Community.

Figure 7

Experimental group: Tweets indicating a fake news label



Figure 8

Control Group: Tweets with no fake news label



Evaluation of news articles

With the aim to observe the capacity of *evaluating (fake / real) news articles* the same news articles were presented to the participants in a randomized order. In order to counteract high drop-out rates as well as to promote a conscientiously reception of the articles the aim was to select not too much but still a sufficient number of articles. After a pretest four articles with a high rate of proper assessment were selected. Finally, two real and two fake articles were chosen. These articles were real messages which were actually published in online news portals and their content has not been modified. Yet, the articles were adapted to each other in terms of their formatting. The main reason for this was to suppress or at least reduce source, message and medium biases. The real articles were stemming from two well-known quality online newspaper outlets in Austria, namely *derstandard.at* and *diepresse.at* whereas the fake articles were obtained through the fact-checking website *correctiv.org*. By choosing the fake articles news articles which were low in facticity were chosen in order to fulfill the characteristics of fake news provided by Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019). Hence, not just articles which were labeled as „false“ but also „for the most part false“ were considered.

In order to observe one's evaluation of (fake / real) articles the participants were requested to carefully and completely read four articles. Each respondent received the same two real and two fake articles. Yet, the chronological order was randomised.

Subsequently, the participants were respectively asked after each article if the presented article appeared to be either fake or real. Additionally, they were asked how certain they were with their judgement using a 4-point-Likert scale. They could select between „Unsicher“, „Eher unsicher“, „Eher sicher“ or „Sicher“. An even Likert scale was chosen to avoid an error of central tendency. Furthermore, a direct answer was desired here.

Later on, fake articles and real articles were observed separately because the assessment of fake and real information might occur through a different way of processing.

Regarding the evaluation of fake articles 46.5% of all participants correctly evaluated both fake articles. 42.8% of all participants were able to correctly evaluate at least one fake article. 10.7% of all participants were not able to correctly evaluate any of the fake articles (see Table B11). Regarding the evaluation of real articles 42.2% of all participants correctly evaluated both real articles. 49.7% of all participants were able to correctly evaluate at least one real article. 8% of all participants were not able to correctly evaluate any of the real articles. (see Table B12).

Statistical Analysis

The statistical evaluation of the gathered data was performed by the means of the statistic software SPSS. At first general information regarding trust in news media and political knowledge considering also age, gender and the educational status of the sample was observed with frequency analysis and cross tabs.

Next, in order to test the hypotheses, it was necessary to select proper statistical testing methods to investigate differences between different independent variables and the dependent variable (evaluation of fake / real articles) as well as possible moderating effects of trust in news media and political knowledge.

In the first case it was solely necessary to test differences between the experimental and the control group. Thus, a t-test appeared to be appropriate for *H1*.

The following hypotheses (*H2-H4*) required another approach as the focus here was on possible moderating effects. Hence, a multiple linear regression (MLR) seemed to be most convenient. Trust in news media as a metric and political knowledge as a quasi-metric variable were adequate regarding their scale level. The variable „group“ indicating the experimental or control group was coded with 0 and 1. In order to further investigate possible moderation effects two interaction variables between trust in news media and the group („mv inter“) and political knowledge and the group („pw inter2“) were formed and considered as predictors.

Results

H1: Priming through a fake news label leads to a lower capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.

Table 1

Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics correct responses for fake news, correct responses for real news

Outcome	Group						95% CI for Mean		
	control			experimental			Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>			
correct fake	.728	.472	96	.771	.446	91	-.175, .090	-.636	185
correct real	.695	.454	96	.676	.444	91	-.110, .149	.297	185

$p < .05$.

H1a: Priming through a fake news label leads to a lower capacity of evaluating fake news articles.

There was no significant difference ($t(185) = -.64$ $p < .53$) between the control group ($M = .7$; $SD = .5$) and the experimental group ($M = .8$; $SD = .5$) regarding the capacity of evaluating fake news articles (see Table 1). Hence, it can be said that priming through a fake news label has no effects on evaluating fake news articles here.

H1b: Priming through a fake news label leads to a lower capacity of evaluating real news articles.

Again, the difference of the number of correct evaluations of real news articles in the control group ($M = .7$; $SD = 0.5$) and the experimental group ($M = .7$; $SD = .4$) was not significant. ($t(185) = -.3$ $p < .77$). It is therefore expected that priming through a fake news label has no effects on evaluating real news articles again.

Table 2*Results of moderation regression analysis of H2, H3, H4*

Outcome	correct fake			Adjusted	correct real			Adjusted
				R^2				R^2
	df	F	$Sig.$		df	F	$Sig.$	
group, mv, mv inter2	3,183	.455	.714	-.009	3,183	.503	.681	-.008
group, pw, pw inter2	3,183	1.517	.212	.008	3,183	.952	.416	-.001
group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2	5,181	1.077	.375	.002	5,181	.892	.488	-.003

H2: *Trust in news media moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.*

H2a: *Trust in news media moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating fake news articles.*

Before an interpretation of the results could be done it was necessary to check if the assumptions of a multiple linear regression were met (Von Auer, 2011). By observing the variance inflation factor within the regression model of the predictors „group, mv, mv inter“ and the dependent variable evaluation of „correct responses for fake news“, multicollinearity appeared (see Table C1).

Furthermore, the R^2 for the overall model was .007 (adjusted $R^2 = -.009$) which indicates a low goodness-of-fit according to Cohen (1988). Trust in news media was not able to moderate an influence of priming through a fake news label on evaluating fake articles. $F(3,183) = .455$ $p < .714$. Moreover, the regression coefficient did not show any significant results (see Table C1).

H2b: Trust in news media moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating real news articles.

Here again, it appeared that the assumptions of the MLR were not completely fulfilled as by observing the variance inflation factor there occurred multicollinearity in the regression model including the predictors „group, mv, mv inter“ and the dependent variable evaluation of „correct responses for real news“ (see Table C2).

With R^2 of .008 (adjusted $R^2 = -.008$) the goodness of the model can be interpreted as low (Cohen, 1988). No moderation of trust in news media on the influence of priming through a fake news label on the evaluation of real news articles could be observed. $F(3,183) = .503$ $p < .681$ Equally, the regression coefficient suggested no significance (see Table C2).

H3: Political knowledge moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.

H3a: Political knowledge moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating fake news articles.

The verification of the assumptions of the multiple linear regression here was satisfying as all requirements were met including the predictors „group, pw, pw inter2“ and the dependent variable evaluation of „correct responses for fake news“.

The model showed with a R^2 of .024 (adjusted $R^2 = .008$) a low level of goodness. (Cohen, 1988) It was not possible to observe a moderating effect of political knowledge on the influence of priming through a fake news label on the evaluation of fake news articles. $F(3,183) = 1.517$ $p < .212$. Again, the regression coefficient showed no significant value. (see Table C3)

H3b: *Political knowledge moderates the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating real news articles.*

By verifying the assumptions of the regression containing the predictors „group, pw, pw inter2“ and the dependent variable evaluation of „correct responses for real news“ no multicollinearity but deviations regarding the normal distribution could be detected. (see Table C4)

The R^2 was .015 (adjusted $R^2 = -.001$), demonstrative for a low goodness-of-fit according to Cohen (1988). Political knowledge was not able to moderate an influence of priming through a fake news label on evaluating real articles. $F(3,183) = .952$ $p < .416$. Moreover, there were no significant results regression coefficient (see Table C4).

H4: *Trust in news media and political knowledge moderate the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating (fake / real) news articles.*

H4a: *Trust in news media and political knowledge moderate the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating fake news articles.*

Once more, the assumptions of the multiple linear regression seemed not to be fulfilled. The multiple regression including the predictors „group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2“ and the dependent variable “correct responses for fake news” presented multicollinearity (see Table C5).

Trust in news media and political knowledge could not moderate an influence of priming through a fake news label on the evaluation of fake news articles. $F(5,181) = 1.077$ $p < .375$. The R^2 of .029 (adjusted $R^2 = .002$) for the model demonstrated a low level of goodness according to Cohen (1988). Again, by observing the regression coefficient no significant effect could be observed. (see Table C5)

H4b: Trust in news media and political knowledge moderate the effect of priming through a fake news label on the capacity of evaluating real news articles.

Also, within the last hypothesis multicollinearity of the regression model including the predictors „group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2“ and the dependent variable evaluation of „correct responses for real news“ appeared (see Table C6).

It was again not possible to observe a moderation effect of trust in news media and political knowledge on the influence of a priming effect through a fake news label on evaluating real news articles. $F(5,181) = .892$ $p < .488$. Here the R^2 was .024 (adjusted $R^2 = -.003$) saying that the level of goodness was low once more (Cohen, 1988). No significant results of the regression coefficient could be observed (see Table C6).

Discussion

By comparing the results of the experiment within this thesis to the initial survey of Van Duyn and Collier (2019) the outcome differs. Here, the theory of media priming does not seem to be applicable. Equally no moderation effects of trust in news media and political knowledge on priming of a fake news label on the evaluation of news articles could be detected. At first this seems surprising but could be explained by the fundamental design of a conceptual replication. As already discussed in detail modifications regarding the population, the geographical context as well as the materials may be of importance. Hence, the possible effects of these adaptations shall be discussed in detail to be aware of how to interpret the results. At first *H1* will be compared to the findings of Van Duyn and Collier's (2019) experiment.

Already concerning the sample there might be a first limitation. It cannot be seen as representative for the population in the German-speaking area as the sociodemographic characteristics appeared to be diverging. To a large part, the participants of this experiment were female, young and well-educated which does not exactly reflect reality. Thus, it would be advisable to conduct further similar investigations with different groups of population.

Having in mind the sample of Van Duyn and Collier's (2019) paper it has to be stressed that the study was carried out in a different geographical context which might also reduce the impact of media priming through a fake news label. Furthermore, the research period has to be taken into account. As already discussed in detail the development of news media seems to be a rapid and complex issue. It might be that people in 2020 despite – or perhaps because of – the wide-spread circulation of false information in midst of the COVID 19 pandemic are more sensitive to issue of fake news. Here again further research is necessary.

It shall be emphasized once more that the material used in the conceptual replication was adapted. This means that the tweets indicating the fake news label have been different and less than in the experiment of Van Duyn and Collier (2019). The same applies to the presented (fake / real) news articles. Firstly, the content of the news articles in the replication study was

varied but also greater attention to the formatting was paid in order to reduce possible bias regarding the characteristics of the messages. These adjustments might have also influenced the final outcome. Nevertheless, there might be personal dispositions within a person unattached to the media prime contributing to the way of how a message is evaluated. Further, it has to be taken into account that the participants may have encountered the news articles beforehand.

In order to observe the outcomes regarding the moderation effects more precisely it is necessary to start with a closer look at the results of the multiple linear regression. At first it has to be stressed that certain hypotheses (*H2a*, *H3a*, *H4a*) showed multicollinearity. This appeared whenever the predictor trust in news media („mv, mv inter“) was involved indicating that trust in news media correlates with priming through a fake news label („group“). Nevertheless, this was accepted as it did not affect the conclusion that the model did not seem significant. Yet, this has to be considered when interpreting the regression coefficient (Von Auer, 2011). Moreover, also the hypothesis with no multicollinearity showed no significant regression coefficient. Hence, it might be predicted that no moderation effects appeared.

Furthermore, it is important to refer to the consequences of a low adjusted R^2 which appeared here. R^2 measures how much of the variance of the dependent variable can be explained in the course of the model. The adjusted R^2 was considered here as it corrects bias due to the inclusion of several independent variables into the construct. The low adjusted R^2 now points out a low explanatory power of the model (Von Auer, 2011; Cohen, 1988).

No significant moderation effects here, despite the high expectations following the theoretical framework, may be traced back to several reasons. It might be, for instance, that the operationalization of the variables was inappropriate or that details within the research design are in charge of these findings. Furthermore, the forecasting power of the research model has to be considered indecisive due to the low R^2 . Yet, it may also be that in this context simply no moderation is expectable.

Further, there might be special limitations regarding the sample size. Despite a high number of participants ($N = 183$) it would be reasonable for further research to perform an a priori power analysis in order to detect the actual satisfying sample size. As there was little empirical evidence on this matter it was solely strived to investigate first predictions as a greater sample size would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

Despite the insignificant results it highlights again the importance of replication in social science insofar it could be shown that it would be incorrect to generalize the theory of media priming in this matter too soon.

Furthermore, there are also limitations regarding the research method which shall be discussed in more detail. There were several reasons to opt for an online experiment. For one thing it was necessary to recruit a high number of participants in a short time during the COVID 19 pandemic. Therefore, a type of survey that could be held out location-independent was needed. Another benefit was also that the data set was immediately available for the analysis. In addition, the setting of an online experiment seemed conducive in terms of external validity. It was attempted to create a kind of natural environment as there was no examiner present during the experiment and in general tweets are consumed online. Yet, it could not be assured that the setting was actually natural as the participants anonymously entered the experiment through a link. Next, it was not possible to monitor if the participants carefully perceived and read both the tweets and the articles. Although the average time spent on the particular parts of the experiment was observed, this could just be an assumption on the attentiveness of the respondents. It is not clear how unaffected the situation really was. Further, it is also questionable if tweets containing a fake news label appear in such a concentrated manner. Moreover, there are several restrictions regarding the conception and selection of the tweets and the articles. Even if it was attempted to provide a quite similar illustration of reality the survey instruments might influence the results of the experiment. In a nutshell, it was strived to achieve a high level of external

validity through an online experiment by consciously being aware of its limitations (Koch et al., 2019).

For future research it might be interesting to investigate the impacts of a fake news label with different modifications of the experimental design. Especially, a more representative sample might provide a better reflection of reality as it would be important to also consider an older age group as well as people with a lower education level.

In sum, the empirical approach with the impact of a fake news label within this thesis shall be encouraging for further scientific investigations despite – or perhaps even because of – the fact that no significant results could be shown here.

Conclusio

An initial theoretical discussion of the issue of fake news showed that false information is a phenomenon that has already been around for a long time. Yet, the environment of social networks in the digital era seems to fuel the spread of questionable content and an actual determination of what fake news seems to blur (see Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Lazer et al., 2018; McNair, 2017; Metzger et al., 2003; Nielsen & Graves, 2017a; Tsfaty & Cappella, 2003; Zimmermann & Kohring, 2018).

After comparing various definitions of what kind of information can be defined as actual fake news three pillars presented by Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) were considered as a relevant benchmark. Hence, information which is low in facticity, intended to deceive and appears in a journalistic format can be regarded as fake news which was also referred to in the subsequent experiment.

Next to this, the so-called fake news label, that seems to come across as a form of accusations against media outlets can be seen as a phenomenon with growing importance in the public discourse. It appears as an extreme form of criticizing without solid principles. In general, media criticism is needed and an important part of media literacy. Yet, the fake news label which is often applied in an anti-elitist discourse might have severe impacts on society. This form of labeling news outlets is also part of post-truth politics insofar it is attempted to address emotions irrespective of actual facts (Butsch, 2008; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Hameleers et al., 2017; Lockie, 2017; Müller et al., 2017; Schultz, 2017; Vande Berg et al., 2004).

According to Van Duyn and Collier (2019) references to the circulation of fake news coming from elites even affects how people evaluate news information. Yet, it has to be taken into consideration that there are further causes which might influence the way people judge the credibility of information. These may lie within the message, regarding, for example, its source or its formatting style which seems to become even more complex in the digital news framework. In addition, psychological mechanism might interplay here. Hence, the way the brain

processes information or concepts like the illusory truth effect may have an impact as well. Furthermore, the role of social identity should not be underestimated (see Metzger et al., 2003; Pennycook et al., 2018; Stroud et al., 2017). These effects are hard to suppress. Yet, it was attempted to at least reduce a bias regarding the content characteristics by appropriately adapting the material used in the experiment.

There is very little empirical evidence on the impact of a so-called fake news label and the academic discussion on the matter of fake news as a genre as well as a label seems to be concentrated on the US American context. This resulted in an initiating scientific interest of investigating the impact of a fake news label in other geographical contexts, especially in the German-speaking area. The survey conducted by Van Duyn and Collier (2019) in 2017 in the US set an example as they could observe “that exposure to elite discourse about fake news leads to less accurate identification of real news.” (p. 29) and traced this back to the priming approach.

After extensively examining the theory of media priming it seemed obvious that moderator variables on priming effects are interesting to observe even though little consistent evidence on the actual impact can be made. This may be due to a strong relation to the respective topic. Nevertheless, two variables, namely trust in news media and political knowledge seemed to consistently show up in the context of media priming. Additionally, these concepts seemed to be of relevance for the thematic focus of this thesis as well. Already for democratic society in general trust in news media and political knowledge are perceived to be highly important. Citizens have to gather information about relevant topics in order to participate in politic processes. In general, trust in news media as well as political knowledge seem to be connected to media consumption habits. One might assume that trust in news media could also influence the impact of a priming effect of a fake news label on the evaluation of news article. Likewise, political knowledge could moderate this effect by supposing that political knowledge affects if, what and how news information is consumed. Last but not least, it seemed as well interesting to observe if trust in news media and political knowledge next to each other have an impact on

a possible priming effect as indications to this could be detected in the theoretical analysis (see Coleman et al., 2012; Delli Carpini, 2000; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Peter, 2002).

A special challenge was to determine how to measure these latent constructs. Even in the academic discourse it seems that there is no clear position on this matter. Trust in news media is hard to measure as it might be based on several factors. Here, the concept of Kohring and Matthes (2007) appeared to be most accurate and was therefore used as a basis for this thesis as it was obvious that solely asking if one trusts or mistrusts the media was considered insufficient. Trust in news media and political knowledge were also regarded by Van Duyn and Collier (2019) though not as a moderating variable. However, their way of operationalizing was not convincing.

By measuring political knowledge, the main focus was on avoiding a gender gap. According to Mondak and Anderson (2004), men are more prone to guess even when not being confident about their response while women would rather state not to know the answer when being uncertain. Hence, it was strived to reduce this effect by using an even scale.

The aim was now to investigate whether a fake news label would have priming effects in a German-speaking area just like elite discourse about fake news seemed to have an impact on the process of evaluating news media within the survey of Van Duyn and Collier (2019). Therefore, a conceptual replication of this experiment was performed.

Despite of their reputation replications are an important part of scientific practice by assuming that reproducibility is a fundamental quality criterion of science. Conceptual replication in particular now aim to test if an underlying theoretical approach can be generalized (see Popper, 1959; Schmidt, 2009; Standing et al., 2014;). In this case the theory of media priming was examined by modifying certain aspects of the original survey. By changing population, the geographical context or the material, it was aimed to detect whether the theory would withstand these adaptations. As slight changes of certain parts of the experimental design might affect how the survey proceeds replication in social sciences are highly relevant (see Charles, 1992).

Ultimately, the geographical context was modified, and the experiment was carried out in the German-speaking context and the stimulus material was switched. The tweets were totally newly developed, and the news articles chosen were different from the initial study. Moreover, the experiment was carried three years later in 2020. The year was characterized by the spread of false information in the course of the COVID 19 pandemic. Therefore, a new perception on the topic may affect the results as well. In general, it can be said that it is difficult to directly compare the findings of a conceptual replication to the initial research work. Yet, the outcomes are of high value by testing the theoretical approach. Further on, the replication was extended in order to observe if trust in news media and political knowledge had a moderating impact on the model (see Bonett, 2012).

After a statistical observation the sample appeared not to be representative for the population of German-speaking context, more precisely the Austrian area. Furthermore, the statistical analysis showed no significant priming effect of a fake news label on how the participants evaluated the presented news articles. The reasons here might be diverse. The divergent results here may be due to the varied sample, the geographical context or modification in the material. Furthermore, psychological dispositions within the person might interplay as well. Nevertheless, this might be the most important evidence of this thesis as it showed that the theory of media priming cannot be generalized here, as slight changes in the research approach can lead to different results. It emphasizes again that replication in science is needed and valuable.

Furthermore, trust in news media and political knowledge did not operate as moderating variables regarding the present experiment. Even though, within some of the tested hypotheses the multiple linear regression showed multicollinearity it can be predicted that no interaction appeared. Yet, the low adjusted R^2 might indicate a lack of predictive power for the model (see Von Auer, 2011). Here again, one has to take into consideration that moderating effects on priming are strongly issue related and findings on this matter are hard to apply to other contexts.

Ultimately, the research questions could be answered insofar priming through a fake news label did not have an impact on the capacity of evaluating fake or real news articles in this experiment. Also trust in news media and political knowledge did not appear as moderator variables here.

These results add valuable findings to the scientific discourse on the fake news label and the importance of replication in science. Hence, the theoretical considerations of this thesis may encourage further scientific investigation on the matter of an impact of fake news as a label.

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Appendix A

Experimental Design (including Questionnaire, Stimuli and News Articles)



Liebe*r Teilnehmer*in,

ich freue mich über Ihre Bereitschaft, an dieser wissenschaftlichen Studie teilzunehmen.

Die Studie setzt sich mit dem **Mediennutzungsverhalten junger Erwachsener in Österreich** auseinander. Ich bitte Sie die folgenden Anweisungen aufmerksam zu befolgen und die Fragen gewissenhaft zu beantworten. Die Antworten können weder richtig, noch falsch sein.

Die Angaben werden **anonym** behandelt und erlauben **keine Rückschlüsse auf Ihre Person**.

Die Befragung wird im Zuge der Abfassung einer wissenschaftlichen Masterarbeit an der Universität Wien erstellt. Die gesammelten Daten können sowohl von der Lehrveranstaltungsleitung, sowie dem Betreuer der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit zu Zwecken der Leistungsbeurteilung eingesehen werden. Die hierbei erhobenen Daten dürfen gemäß Art. 89 Abs. 1 DSGVO unbeschränkt gespeichert werden.

Der*die Befragte hat das Recht auf Auskunft durch die Verantwortlichen an dieser Studie über die erhobenen personenbezogenen Daten sowie das Recht auf Berichtigung, Löschung, Einschränkung der Verarbeitung der Daten, sowie ein Widerspruchsrecht gegen die Verarbeitung und des Rechts auf Datenübertragbarkeit.

Bevor der Fragebogen beginnt, sehen Sie folgend detaillierte Informationen zu Ihren Rechten und werden nochmals um Ihre Zustimmung gebeten. Ihre Daten werden ausschließlich auf Grundlage der gesetzlichen Bestimmungen (§ 2f Abs. 5 FOG) erhoben und verarbeitet. Sie verfügen somit über folgende persönliche Rechte im Rahmen der folgenden Befragung:

- Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie gestaltet sich als **freiwillig**. Sie können den Fragebogen jederzeit abbrechen.
- Ihre Teilnahme ist natürlich **anonym**, Ihre Antworten können nicht auf Sie und Ihre Person zurückgeführt werden. Das bedeutet auch, dass Ihr persönlicher Datensatz nach Abschluss der Befragung für mich nicht identifizierbar ist.
- Falls Sie nach der Teilnahme an der Studie Auskunft über Ihre Daten haben oder Ihre Teilnahme zurückziehen möchten, nennen dies bitte im abschließenden Kommentarfeld (falls nötig gemeinsam mit einer Kontaktadresse)
- Ihre Daten werden ausschließlich für **wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet** und nicht an Dritte weitergegeben.
- Ihre Daten werden somit **streng vertraulich** behandelt.

Wenn Sie Fragen zu folgender Erhebung haben, wenden Sie sich bitte gerne an die Verantwortliche dieser Untersuchung:

Lena Waltenberger (lena.waltenberger@univie.ac.at), Studentin der Studienrichtung Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft an der Universität Wien, Währinger Straße 29, 1090 Wien.

Die Richtlinien guter ethischer Forschung sehen vor, dass sich die Teilnehmer/innen an empirischen Studien explizit und nachvollziehbar mit der Teilnahme einverstanden erklären.

Freiwilligkeit. Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Untersuchung ist freiwillig. Es steht Ihnen zu jedem Zeitpunkt dieser Studie frei, Ihre Teilnahme abzuberechnen, ohne dass Ihnen daraus Nachteile entstehen.

Anonymität. Ihre Daten sind selbstverständlich vertraulich, werden nur in anonymisierter Form ausgewertet und nicht an Dritte weitergegeben. Demographische Angaben wie Alter oder Geschlecht lassen keinen eindeutigen Schluss auf Ihre Person zu.

Fragen. Falls Sie noch Fragen zu dieser Studie haben sollten, finden Sie im Anschluss ein Impressum mit Kontaktdaten der Studienleiter.

Hiermit bestätige ich, dass ich mindestens 18 Jahre alt bin sowie die Einverständniserklärung gelesen und verstanden habe.

- ☐ Nein (nicht an der Studie teilnehmen)
- ☐ Ja

Welches Geschlecht haben Sie?

Ich bin...

- ☐ männlich
- ☐ weiblich
- ☐ andere
- ☐ keine Angabe

Wie alt sind Sie?

Bitte geben Sie ihr Alter in vollen Jahren an.

Ich bin...

Jahre alt.

Was ist der höchste Bildungsabschluss, den Sie im Moment erreicht haben?

Sollten Sie eine Schule im Ausland besucht haben, geben Sie bitte jenen Abschluss an, der Ihrem am ehesten gleichkommt.

- ☐ Sonderschule, Hauptschule, Unterstufe AHS, NMS
- ☐ BMS, Lehre
- ☐ Lehre mit Matura
- ☐ AHS
- ☐ BHS mit Abschluss (zB HTL, HAK, HBLA)
- ☐ Fachlehrgang oder Kolleg
- ☐ Universitärer Abschluss: Bachelor/Bakkalaureat
- ☐ Universitärer Abschluss: Master, Magister, Diplom Ingenieur
- ☐ Universitärer Abschluss: Doktorat, PhD
- ☐ Anderer Abschluss
- ☐ Keine Angabe

Welche Nachrichtenkanäle nutzen Sie regelmäßig, um sich über aktuelle Themen zu informieren?

(mehrere Antworten sind möglich)

- ☐ TV-Nachrichten
- ☐ Radionachrichten
- ☐ Gedruckte Zeitungen
- ☐ Gedruckte Nachrichtenmagazine
- ☐ Zeitungen online
- ☐ Nachrichtenmagazine online
- ☐ Soziale Netzwerke
- ☐ TV und Radioanbieter online
- ☐ Sonstige Nachrichtenquellen online
- ☐ Weitere

Denken Sie an **mediale Berichterstattung** und bewerten Sie bitte folgende Aussagen:

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme nicht zu	Stimme zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Keine Angabe
Wichtige Themen bekommen die nötige Aufmerksamkeit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wichtige Themen wird ein adäquater Status zugesprochen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Häufigkeit der Berichterstattung über wichtige Themen ist ausreichend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wichtige Themen werden aufgrund der nötigen Regelmäßigkeit erfasst.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme nicht zu	Stimme zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Keine Angabe
Wesentliche Punkte werden miteinbezogen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Der Fokus liegt auf den wichtigen Fakten.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wesentliche Informationen die wichtige Themen betreffen, werden bereitgestellt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Berichterstattung beinhaltet unterschiedliche Sichtweisen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme nicht zu	Stimme zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Keine Angabe
Informationen innerhalb der Berichterstattung könnten bei einer Überprüfung bestätigt werden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Berichtete Informationen sind wahr.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Berichterstattung berichtet Fakten wahrheitsgemäß.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fakten, die mich zu einem wichtigen Thema erreichen, sind korrekt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme nicht zu	Stimme zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Keine Angabe
Informationen innerhalb der Berichterstattung könnten bei einer Überprüfung bestätigt werden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Berichtete Informationen sind wahr.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Berichterstattung berichtet Fakten wahrheitsgemäß.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fakten, die mich zu einem wichtigen Thema erreichen, sind korrekt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme nicht zu	Stimme zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Keine Angabe
Kritik wird in angemessener Art und Weise geäußert.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journalistische Meinungen sind gut begründet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kommentare zu wichtigen Themen beinhalten gut reflektierte Schlussfolgerungen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich habe das Gefühl, dass journalistische Einschätzungen hinsichtlich wichtiger Themen nützlich sind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Wer ist der*die amtierende Präsident*in des Europäischen Rates?

- ☐ Charles Michel
- ☐ Ursula von der Leyen
- ☐ Donald Tusk
- ☐ Jean-Claude Juncker

Wie viele Mitgliedstaaten hat die Europäische Union aktuell?

- ☐ 28 Mitgliedstaaten
- ☐ 27 Mitgliedstaaten
- ☐ 25 Mitgliedstaaten
- ☐ 29 Mitgliedstaaten

Wer ist der*die amtierende Nationalratspräsident*in in Österreich?

- ☐ Wolfgang Sobotka
- ☐ Doris Bures
- ☐ Alexander Van der Bellen
- ☐ Andreas Khol

Wieviele Mitglieder hat der österreichische Bundesrat aktuell?

- ☐ 183 Mitglieder
- ☐ 27 Mitglieder
- ☐ 61 Mitglieder
- ☐ 65 Mitglieder

Wie lange kann der Bundespräsident in Österreich maximal ununterbrochen im Amt sein?

- ☐ 12 Jahre
- ☐ 10 Jahre
- ☐ 4 Jahre
- ☐ 8 Jahre
- ☐ 5 Jahre

Bitte sehen Sie sich die folgenden Tweets aufmerksam an.

<p>Andreas Hinterberger @a_hinterberger</p> <p>Alles Ausreden! Manche mögen es als Schlampe bezeichnen, ich nenne das Leichter gestreute Falschinformationen! Leider Alltag geworden...</p> <p>10:53 AM · Feb 4, 2020</p> <p>27 Retweets 263 Likes</p>	<p>Elisabeth Hochwalter @hochwalter_elli</p> <p>Wahnsinn! Dieser Anschlag in Wien hat es mal wieder bestätigt. Fake News verbreiten und Panik machen... das sind unsere Medien!</p> <p>7:23 AM · Nov 4, 2020</p> <p>14 Retweets 172 Likes</p>
<p>Herbert Tiefenbrauer @htiefenbrauer</p> <p>Coronakrise heißt auch uneingeschränkte Verbreitung von Fake News. Und zwar über die gesamte Medienlandschaft hinweg!</p> <p>3:43 PM · May 6, 2020</p> <p>23 Retweets 432 Likes</p>	<p>Heinz Heller @heinz_heller</p> <p>Wir müssen endlich verstehen, dass die Digitalisierung der Nährboden für die Verbreitung von Falschinformationen ist!</p> <p>12:09 PM · Jan 23, 2019</p> <p>31 Retweets 168 Likes</p>
<p>Josef Hofbauer @josef_hofbauer</p> <p>Ich sag mal so: Die Medien berichten das, was sie berichten wollen. Und nur das. Fairer Wahlkampf sieht anders aus. Punkt.</p> <p>6:54 AM · May 13, 2019</p> <p>18 Retweets 348 Likes</p>	<p>Lisa Meierhofer @lisa_meierhofer</p> <p>Wenn wir die Klimakrise in den Griff bekommen wollen, dann sind zuerst die Medien gefordert. Quellen prüfen, Fake News stoppen!</p> <p>7:31 AM · Sep 19, 2018</p> <p>6 Retweets 97 Likes</p>
<p>Simon Glasner @glasner_simon</p> <p>Also wenn Politikern vorgeworfen wird dauernd zu lügen, dann will ich gar nicht erst von den Journalisten und den Medien in diesem Land anfangen.</p> <p>7:34 AM · Sep 13, 2019</p> <p>9 Retweets 87 Likes</p>	<p>Susanne Willinger @sus_willinger</p> <p>Vor allem im Bereich Bildung sollte man endlich auf Medienkompetenz setzen. Die aktuelle Situation ist erschreckend. Ich sehe vor lauter Fake News die News nicht mehr...</p> <p>7:23 PM · Oct 12, 2018</p> <p>33 Retweets 251 Likes</p>
<p>Andreas Hinterberger @a_hinterberger</p> <p>Die Covid-19 Krise trifft vor allem die heimische Tourismusbranche. Wir müssen hier auch mal über Perspektiven sprechen bitte...</p> <p>12:09 PM · Apr 3, 2020</p> <p>27 Retweets 263 Likes</p>	<p>Elisabeth Hochwalter @hochwalter_elli</p> <p>Coronakrise ist eine Gesundheitskrise. Dazu gehört auch unsere psychische Gesundheit!</p> <p>7:23 AM · Nov 4, 2020</p> <p>14 Retweets 172 Likes</p>
<p>Herbert Tiefenbrauer @htiefenbrauer</p> <p>Pandemie bedeutet auch Rezession. Wie hart diese ausfallen wird, ist schwer zu sagen. Das Konjunkturpaket ist aber ein Schritt in die richtige Richtung!</p> <p>1:42 PM · Aug 4, 2020</p> <p>23 Retweets 432 Likes</p>	<p>Heinz Heller @heinz_heller</p> <p>Endlich tut sich was! Sehen wir die Coronakrise doch als Chance im Bereich der Digitalisierung.</p> <p>1:42 PM · Apr 24, 2020</p> <p>31 Retweets 168 Likes</p>
<p>Josef Hofbauer @josef_hofbauer</p> <p>Wer hätte das gedacht? Wahlkampf scheint auch ohne Kirtag zu funktionieren. In Zeiten von Covid-19 ist ja wirklich alles anders...</p> <p>1:42 PM · Sep 19, 2020</p> <p>18 Retweets 348 Likes</p>	<p>Lisa Meierhofer @lisa_meierhofer</p> <p>Die Klimakrise darf genau jetzt nicht in Vergessenheit geraten und vielleicht zum nächsten Opfer der Pandemie werden.</p> <p>7:31 PM · Sep 19, 2020</p> <p>6 Retweets 97 Likes</p>
<p>Simon Glasner @glasner_simon</p> <p>Unzählige Pressekonferenzen, unzählige Maßnahmen... Ich bin ja mal sehr gespannt, wie Politik nach Corona funktionieren wird!</p> <p>7:34 PM · Nov 2, 2020</p> <p>9 Retweets 87 Likes</p>	<p>Susanne Willinger @sus_willinger</p> <p>Distance-Learning ist keine Lösung. Wir müssen jetzt reagieren, damit wir die Generation Corona nicht verlieren!</p> <p>7:48 PM · Nov 14, 2020</p> <p>33 Retweets 251 Likes</p>

Note: Experimental group: Tweets indicating a fake news label

Note: Control Group: Tweets with no fake news label

Bitte lesen Sie den folgenden Artikel aufmerksam durch.

US-Militär nimmt im neuen Jahr doch Transgender-Rekruten an

Trump-Regierung sieht von Anhörung des Obersten Gerichts offenbar ab
30. Dezember 2017

Washington – In den USA dürfen sich ab Neujahr erstmals bekennende Transgender bei den US-Streitkräften bewerben. Dies gab ein Sprecher des Verteidigungsministeriums am Freitag bekannt. Aus Kreisen des Justizministeriums verlautete dazu, die Regierung von Präsident Donald Trump werde im seit Monaten anhaltenden Streit über eine Zulassung nicht das Oberste Gericht anrufen.

Man wolle einen unabhängigen Bericht zum Thema abwarten, der in den kommenden Wochen veröffentlicht werden dürfte. Damit gilt der von Verteidigungsminister James Mattis gesetzte Stichtag 1. Jänner 2018 für die Annahme von Bewerbungen.

Trump verbietet Transgender beim Militär

Trump's Vorgänger Barack Obama hatte ursprünglich die Zulassung ab dem 1. Juli 2017 angeordnet. Mattis verschob diese Frist um sechs Monate. Ende August ordnete Trump dann ein Verbot des Militärdienstes für Transgender an und begründete dies unter anderem mit hohen medizinischen Kosten. Während konservative Anhänger des Präsidenten den Schritt begrüßten, kritisierten Bürgerrechtler ihn.

Richter in vier Bundesstaaten haben seitdem das Verbot durch einstweilige Verfügungen außer Kraft gesetzt, bis über die Klagen dagegen entschieden wurde. In der vergangenen Woche lehnten dann zwei Bundesberufungsgerichte Anträge der Regierung ab, das Verbot doch zu bestätigen. Ihr wäre damit nur noch die Möglichkeit geblieben, das Oberste Gericht anzurufen.

Transgender sind Menschen, deren sexuelle Identität nicht den biologischen Geschlechtsmerkmalen entspricht, mit denen sie geboren wurden. Einer Studie aus dem vergangenen Jahr zufolge dienen in den US-Streitkräften 2500 Transgender, weitere 1500 sind Reservisten.

Würden Sie diesen Artikel als „Fake News“ oder als „Real News“ bewerten?

☐ Fake News

☐ Real News

Wie sicher sind Sie sich mit Ihrer Einschätzung?

☐ Sicher

☐ Eher Sicher

☐ Eher Unsicher

☐ Unsicher

Bitte lesen Sie den folgenden Artikel aufmerksam durch.

2030 wird Schweden ein Dritte Welt Land sein

19. Oktober 2017

Der UN-Bericht HDI (Human Development Index) prognostiziert einen deutlichen Rückgang des schwedischen Wohlstandes im Vergleich zu seinen nordischen Nachbarn, die ihre Spitzenpositionen beibehalten und langfristig sogar global stärken werden.

Im Jahr 2010 lag Schweden auf dem 15. Platz im HDI-Ranking, nach UN-Prognosen wird Schweden 2015 auf dem 25. und im Jahr 2030 dem 45. Platz liegen.

Schweden ist eines der wenigen Länder, in dem sich die Zukunftsaussichten seit 2010 deutlich verschlechtert haben.

Finnland hat im Vergleich eines der besten Schulsysteme der Welt, während die Schulen in Schweden die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit verloren haben.

In den nordeuropäischen Nachbarländern läuft der Bezug von Geldleistungen vergleichbar mit der deutschen Sozialhilfe früher aus, wobei in Schweden immer mehr Familienhaushalte von Sozialgeld leben, was sich auf die globale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit auswirkt und sie beeinträchtigt.

Negative Entwicklungen, oder vielmehr Liquidationen, können beispielsweise bei Orrefors Kosta Boda beobachtet werden, ein Zusammenschluss der vormals eigenständigen Glashütten Orrefors, Kosta Boda und Åfors, die im so genannten Glasreich in der südschwedischen Provinz Småland ansässig sind. 1992 hatte Orrefors Kosta Boda in Schweden 940 Mitarbeiter und war profitabel. Heute verbleiben nach weiteren Kostensenkungen und Anpassungen weniger als 100 Personen im Unternehmen, um dem globalen Wettbewerb begegnen zu können.

Die meisten der heute weniger entwickelten Länder wie Kuba, Mexiko, die baltischen Länder und Bulgarien werden laut dem Bericht der UNO, Schweden im Jahr 2030 in Sachen Wohlstand überholt haben.

Selbst Griechenland, das heute mehr oder weniger bankrott ist, wird bis zum Jahr 2030 den 13. Platz erreicht haben.

Würden Sie diesen Artikel als „Fake News“ oder „Real News“ bewerten?

- ☒ Fake News
☐ Real News

Wie sicher sind Sie sich mit Ihrer Einschätzung?

- ☒ Sicher ☐ Eher sicher ☐ Eher unsicher ☐ Unsicher

Bitte lesen Sie den folgenden Artikel aufmerksam durch.

LEGO will bis 2030 die gesamte Produktion auf Hanfplastik umstellen

10. Juli 2019

Mit der Entscheidung für den Einsatz umweltfreundlicher und nachhaltiger Materialien trifft der Spielzeughersteller LEGO den Nerv der Zeit. Bis 2030 soll das gesamte Sortiment von Kunststoff auf Plastik aus Hanf umgestellt werden.

LEGO wurde vor fast 60 Jahren gegründet und die Erfolgsgeschichte des dänischen Spielzeugherstellers stützt sich unter anderem auf die bekannten Legosteine. Jetzt investiert der größte Spielzeughersteller der Welt Millionen, um die Kunststoffsteine in Zukunft aus Hanf zu fertigen. Wie die Nachrichtenseite Plastic News berichtet, soll die Umstellung bis zum Jahr 2030 perfekt sein.

Allan Rasmussen ist Projektmanager bei LEGO und verspricht, dass sich die Bausteine aus dem neuen Material nicht von den alten Legosteinen unterscheiden lassen. Außerdem habe man ein Material finden müssen, das in 50 Jahren immer noch wie neu sei.

Plastik aus Hanf

Kunststoff aus Hanf ist in vielerlei Hinsicht nachhaltiger als die Gewinnung aus Erdöl. Bis Plastik abgebaut wurde, vergehen zwischen 500–100 Jahre. Vor allem die Verschmutzung der Weltmeere durch Plastik ist ein großes Umweltproblem. Der von uns entsorgte Kunststoff verschmutzt nicht nur die Umwelt. Er landet als Mikroplastik in unserer Nahrung und wird letztendlich von uns aufgenommen.

Der Hauptbestandteil von Plastik ist Zellulose, die hauptsächlich aus Petroleum gewonnen wird. Zellulose kann jedoch auch aus organischen Materialien hergestellt werden. Zum Beispiel aus Hanf, der mit seinem hohen Gehalt an Zellulose dafür prädestiniert ist. Hinzu kommt, dass Hanfplastik vollständig biologisch abbaubar ist.

Nachhaltige Zukunft

Das australische Unternehmen Zeoform arbeitet seit mehreren Jahren an der Entwicklung von biologisch abbaubaren Technologien aus Hanf. Wie das Unternehmen berichtet, habe man eine neue Art von sehr robustem Kunststoff entwickelt, der vollständig aus Hanf hergestellt ist. Das Material kann in unterschiedlichste Formen gegossen werden oder für die Produktion zahlreicher Produkte, wie Strohhalme, Möbel oder eben Spielzeug verwendet werden.

Plastic News zufolge verwendet LEGO für die Produktion der Bausteine jedes Jahr mehr als 6.000 Tonnen Plastik. Umso wichtiger ist die Entscheidung des dänischen Unternehmens für die nachhaltige und umweltfreundliche Alternative aus Hanf.

Würden Sie diesen Artikel als „Fake News“ oder „Real News“ bewerten?

- ☒ Fake News
☐ Real News

Wie sicher sind Sie sich mit Ihrer Einschätzung?

- ☒ Sicher ☐ Eher sicher ☐ Eher unsicher ☐ Unsicher

Bitte lesen Sie den folgenden Artikel aufmerksam durch.

Wie die Betroffenen illegal zu ihren beiden Pässen kamen

Doppelstaatsbürgerschaften sind in der Türkei erlaubt – viele nutzten das aus.
18.12.2018

Wien. Doppel- und Mehrfachstaatsbürgerschaften sind in Österreich in der Regel nicht erlaubt und werden nur in seltenen Fällen bewilligt. Wer als Türke die österreichische Staatsbürgerschaft erwirbt, muss also die türkische zurücklegen. Nach der Verleihung hat er aber (nach türkischem Recht, nicht nach österreichischem) die Möglichkeit, die türkische zurückzuerwerben. Davon haben in der Vergangenheit viele Gebrauch gemacht, um in der Türkei bei Behördengängen, Wohnungs- und Grundstückskäufen sowie Testamentseröffnungen keine Nachteile zu haben.

Die Türkei erlaubt dieses Vorgehen, da nach türkischem Staatsbürgerschaftsrecht Doppelstaatsbürgerschaften grundsätzlich möglich sind. Und da die türkischen Behörden in dieser Causa mit den österreichischen nicht kooperieren, konnte Österreich in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten kaum etwas gegen diese Vorgänge tun. Bis die Liste mit den konkreten Namen auftauchte, der die Behörden nun nachgingen.

Übrigens: Kinder teilen das Schicksal der Eltern. Niemand kann argumentieren, bei der Wiederaufnahme der türkischen Staatsbürgerschaft ein Kind gewesen zu sein und keine Verantwortung dafür zu tragen.

Würden Sie diesen Artikel als „Fake News“ oder „Real News“ bewerten?

- ☐ Fake News
- ☐ Real News

Wie sicher sind Sie sich mit Ihrer Einschätzung?

☐ Sicher

☐ Eher sicher

☐ Eher unsicher

☐ Unsicher

Herzlichen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Wir möchten Sie kurz über die Ziele der Studie aufklären. Bitte lesen Sie sich dazu folgende Information durch:

Das **Ziel** dieser Studie ist es, **Priming-Effekte** eines „**Fake News Labels**“ auf das Beurteilungsvermögen des Wahrheitsgehaltes von Artikeln zu untersuchen. Daneben wird auch erhoben, ob durch Medienvertrauen eine Moderation auftritt.

Das „**Fake News Label**“ beschreibt das Phänomen einer instrumentalisierten Anwendung des Begriffes „Fake News“ um Medien zu diskreditieren. **Priming** bedeutet, kurz gesagt, dass durch vorangehende Informationen die Bewertung darauffolgender Informationen beeinflusst wird.

Um diesen Effekt zu untersuchen gab es in diesem Experiment zwei Gruppen. In einer Experimentalgruppe erhielten alle Teilnehmer*innen Stimuli in Form von Tweets, die ein „Fake News Label“ beinhalteten. In einer Kontrollgruppe erhielten alle Teilnehmer*innen Tweets zu einem anderen Thema. Inhalte der Tweets, sowie Informationen zu den Twitter-Accounts (Usernamen und Profilbilder) waren fiktiv und wurden zu Forschungszwecken erstellt.

Das Erkenntnisinteresse lag nun darin zu untersuchen, ob diese Stimuli Auswirkungen auf das Beurteilungsvermögen des Wahrheitsgehaltes von Artikeln haben. Es handelte sich hierbei um zwei reale und zwei fake Artikel, deren Inhalt wirklich publiziert wurde.

Real waren der Artikel **„US-Militär nimmt im neuen Jahr doch Transgender-Rekruten an“** (derstandard.at) und **„Wie die Betroffenen illegal zu ihren beiden Pässen kamen“** (diepresse.at).

Fake waren die Artikel **„2030 wird Schweden ein Dritte Welt Land sein“** (correctiv.org) und **„Lego will bis 2030 die gesamte Produktion auf Hanfplastik umstellen“** (correctiv.org)

Falls Sie generelle Fragen und Anmerkungen haben, können Sie sich sehr gerne bei mir melden:

Waltenberger, Lena Maria

lena.waltenberger@univie.ac.at

Um die Befragung abzuschließen, klicken Sie bitte auf 'weiter'.

Weiter

Appendix B

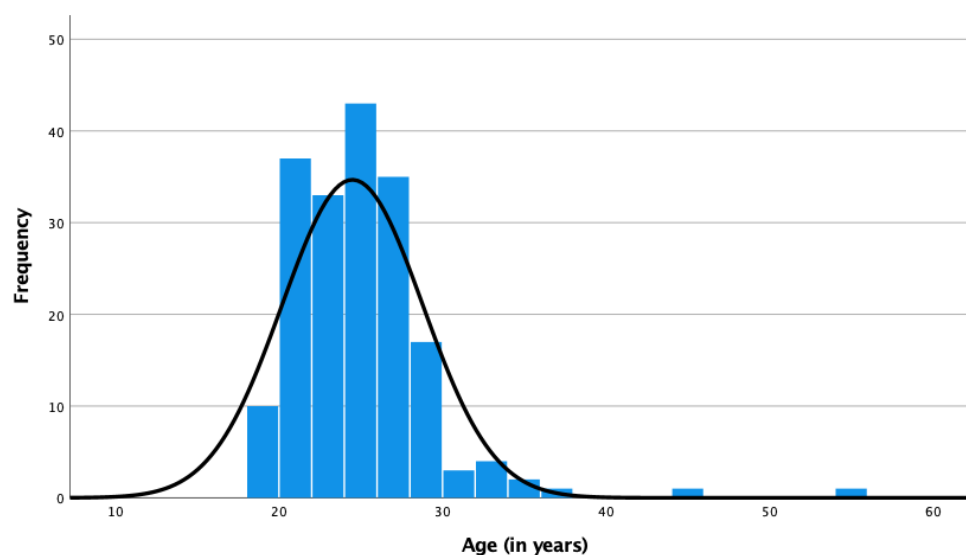
Sociodemographic Data

Table B1*Frequency Analysis of Gender*

	Frequency	%
Male	56	29,9
Female	129	69,0
Total	185	98,9
No Response	2	1,1
	187	100,0

Table B2*Frequency Analysis of Age*

Alter: Ich bin... .. Jahre alt.		
N	Valid	187
	Missing	0
Mean		24,49
Std. Deviation		4,302

Figure B1**Table B3***Frequency Analysis of Education*

	Frequency	%
Sonderschule, Hauptschule, Unterstufe AHS, NMS	2	1,1%
BMS, Lehre	2	1,1%
AHS	47	25,1%
BHS mit Abschluss (zB HTL, HAK, HBLA)	28	15,0%
Fachlehrgang oder Kolleg	1	0,5%
Universitärer Abschluss: Bachelor/Bakkalaureat	74	39,6%
Universitärer Abschluss: Master, Magister, Diplom Ingenieur	26	13,9%
Anderer Abschluss	1	0,5%
Lehre mit Matura	6	3,2%

Table B4*Cross Table: Education and Gender*

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Education	Sonderschule, Hauptschule, Unterstufe AHS, NMS	Count	1	0	1
		% within Gender	1,8%	0,0%	0,5%
	BMS, Lehre	Count	1	1	2
		% within Gender	1,8%	0,8%	1,1%
	AHS	Count	13	34	47
		% within Gender	23,2%	26,4%	25,4%
	BHS mit Abschluss (zB HTL, HAK, HBLA)	Count	5	23	28
		% within Gender	8,9%	17,8%	15,1%
	Fachlehrgang oder Kolleg	Count	0	1	1
		% within Gender	0,0%	0,8%	0,5%
	Universitärer Abschluss: Bachelor/Bakkalaureat	Count	22	52	74
		% within Gender	39,3%	40,3%	40,0%
	Universitärer Abschluss: Master, Magister, Diplom Ingenieur	Count	13	12	25
		% within Gender	23,2%	9,3%	13,5%
	Anderer Abschluss	Count	0	1	1
		% within Gender	0,0%	0,8%	0,5%
	Lehre mit Matura	Count	1	5	6
		% within Gender	1,8%	3,9%	3,2%
Total		Count	56	129	185
		% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

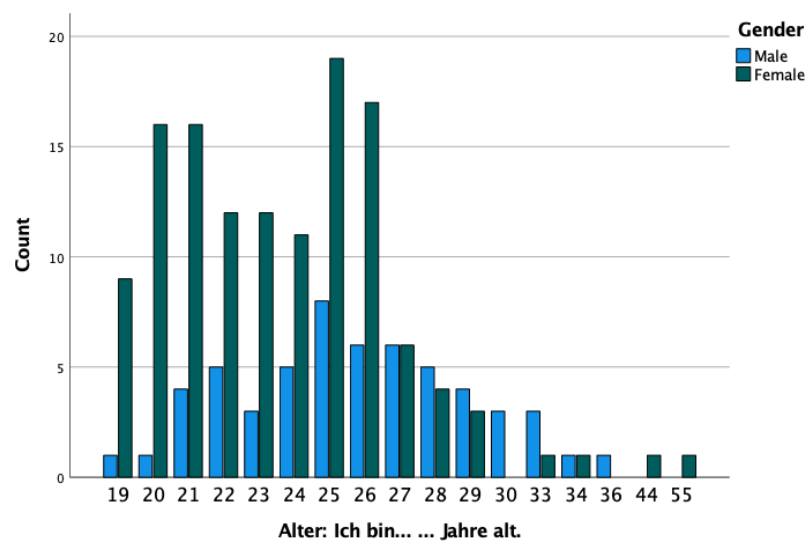
Figure B2

Table B5*Reliability Analysis: Trust in News Media*

Cronbachs Alpha	Number of Items
,890	16

Item Scale Analysis

	Scale Mean if item deleted	Scale Variance if item deleted	Adjusted item scale correlation	Cronbachs Alpha if item deleted
Themenselektivität: Wichtige Themen bekommen die nötige Aufmerksamkeit.	41,31	36,959	,631	,880
Themenselektivität: Wichtige Themen wird ein adäquater Status zugesprochen.	41,33	37,021	,594	,882
Themenselektivität: Die Häufigkeit der Berichterstattung über wichtige Themen ist ausreichend.	41,47	37,622	,486	,886
Themenselektivität: Wichtige Themen werden aufgrund der nötigen Regelmäßigkeit erfasst.	41,45	37,978	,479	,886
Faktenselektivität: Wesentliche Punkte werden miteinbezogen.	41,22	37,887	,610	,882
Faktenselektivität: Der Fokus liegt auf den wichtigen Fakten.	41,34	37,569	,562	,883
Faktenselektivität: Wesentliche Informationen die wichtige Themen betreffen, werden bereitgestellt.	41,25	37,302	,631	,881
Faktenselektivität: Die Berichterstattung beinhaltet unterschiedliche Sichtweisen.	41,67	37,538	,486	,886
Glaubwürdigkeit: Informationen innerhalb der Berichterstattung könnten bei einer Überprüfung bestätigt werden.	41,15	38,942	,429	,888
Glaubwürdigkeit: Berichtete Informationen sind wahr.	41,21	38,026	,539	,884
Glaubwürdigkeit: Berichterstattung berichtet Fakten wahrheitsgemäß.	41,25	37,774	,592	,882
Glaubwürdigkeit: Fakten, die mich zu einem wichtigen Thema erreichen, sind korrekt.	41,21	36,879	,595	,882
Journalistische Bewertungen: Kritik wird in angemessener Art und Weise geäußert.	41,47	37,022	,578	,882
Journalistische Bewertungen: Journalistische Meinungen sind gut begründet.	41,31	37,759	,572	,883
Journalistische Bewertungen: Kommentare zu wichtigen Themen beinhalten gut reflektierte Schlussfolgerungen.	41,46	38,065	,477	,886
Journalistische Bewertungen: Ich habe das Gefühl, dass journalistische Einschätzungen hinsichtlich wichtiger Themen n...	41,08	37,301	,514	,885

Table B6*Frequency Analysis: Social Network Users*

N	%
152	81,3%

Frequency Analysis: Newspaper Online Readers

N	%
162	86,6%

Table B7*Frequency Analysis: Trust in News Media*

	Frequency	%
Low	47	25,1
Average	99	52,9
High	41	21,9
Total	187	100,0

Table B8*Cross Table: Trust in News Media and Social Network Users*

		Social Network Users	
Trust in News Media	Low	Count	41
		% Social Network Users	27,0%
	Average	Count	80
		% Social Network Users	52,6%
	High	Count	31
		% Social Network Users	20,4%
Total	Count	152	
	% Social Network Users	100,0%	

Table B9*Cross Table: Trust in News Media and Newspaper Online Readers*

			Newspaper Online Readers
Trust in News Media	Low	Count	37
		% within Newspaper Online Readers	22,8%
	Average	Count	90
		% within Newspaper Online Readers	55,6%
	High	Count	35
		% within Newspaper Online Readers	21,6%
Total		Count	162
		% within Newspaper Online Readers	100,0%

Table B10*Frequency Analysis: Political Knowledge*

	Frequency	%
Low	76	40,6
Average	47	25,1
High	64	34,2
Total	187	100,0

Table B11*Frequency Analysis: Correct Responses for Fake Articles*

	Frequency	%
0	20	10,7
1	80	42,8
2	87	46,5
Total	187	100,0

Table B12*Frequency Analysis: Correct Responses for Real Articles*

	Frequency	%
0	15	8,0
1	93	49,7
2	79	42,2
Total	187	100,0

Appendix C

Statistical Data for Hypotheses

H2a: Results of MLR of the dependent variable “correct responses for fake news” and the predictors “group, mv, mv inter”

Table C1

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,086 ^a	,007	-,009	,46099	1,855

a. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, mv inter

b. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	,290	3	,097	,455	,714 ^b
	Residual	38,890	183	,213		
	Total	39,180	186			

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

b. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, mv inter

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,454	,304		1,490	,138		
	group	,190	,468	,208	,406	,685	,021	48,242
	mv	,100	,110	,089	,913	,362	,570	1,754
	mv inter	-,055	,168	-,169	-,325	,746	,020	49,603

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

H2b: Results of MLR of the dependent variable “correct responses real news” and the predictors “group, mv, mv inter”

Table C2

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,090 ^a	,008	-,008	,44995	1,543

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

b. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, mv inter

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	,305	3	,102	,503	,681 ^b
	Residual	37,050	183	,202		
	Total	37,355	186			

a. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, mv inter

b. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,821	,297		2,764	,006		
	group	,237	,457	,265	,519	,604	,021	48,242
	mv	-,046	,107	-,042	-,429	,668	,570	1,754
	mv inter	-,092	,164	-,290	-,560	,576	,020	49,603

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

H3a: Results of MLR of the dependent variable “correct responses for fake news” and the predictors “group, pw, pw inter2”

Table C3

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,156 ^a	,024	,008	,45706	1,873

a. Predictors: (Constant), group, pw, pw inter2

b. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	,951	3	,317	1,517	,212 ^b
	Residual	38,230	183	,209		
	Total	39,180	186			

a. Predictors: (Constant), group, pw, pw inter

b. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,551	,104		5,287	,000		
	group	,292	,153	,319	1,907	,058	,191	5,248
	pw	,063	,033	,190	1,909	,058	,536	1,866
	pw inter2	-,089	,049	-,330	-1,816	,071	,162	6,175

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

H3b: Results of MLR of the dependent variable “correct responses for real news” and the predictors “group, pw, pw inter2”

Table C4*Model Summary^b*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,124 ^a	,015	-,001	,44832	1,547

a. Predictors: (Constant), group, pw, pw inter2

b. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	,574	3	,191	,952	,416 ^b
	Residual	36,781	183	,201		
	Total	37,355	186			

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

b. Predictors: (Constant), group, pw, pw inter2

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,545	,102		5,339	,000		
	group	,104	,150	,116	,690	,491	,191	5,248
	pw	,054	,033	,165	1,642	,102	,536	1,866
	pw inter2	-,044	,048	-,168	-,922	,358	,162	6,175

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

H4a: Results of MLR of the dependent variable “correct responses for fake news” and the predictors “group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2”

Table C5

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,170 ^a	,029	,002	,45849	1,851

a. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2

b. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1,132	5	,226	1,077	,375 ^b
	Residual	38,048	181	,210		
	Total	39,180	186			

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

b. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,311	,312		,996	,321		
	group	,378	,476	,413	,794	,428	,020	50,373
	mv	,089	,110	,079	,813	,417	,568	1,759
	pw	,062	,033	,186	1,855	,065	,534	1,872
	mv inter	-,032	,168	-,098	-,190	,850	,020	50,074
	pw inter2	-,089	,049	-,331	-1,811	,072	,160	6,231

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Fake News (weighted)

H4b: Results of MLR of the dependent variable “correct responses for real news” and the predictors “group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2”

Table C6

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,155 ^a	,024	-,003	,44880	1,546

a. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2

b. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	,898	5	,180	,892	,488 ^b
	Residual	36,457	181	,201		
	Total	37,355	186			

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)

b. Predictors: (Constant), group, mv, pw, mv inter, pw inter2

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,696		2,276	,024		
	group	,339	,379	,727	,468	,020	50,373
	mv	-,056	-,051	-,523	,602	,568	1,759
	pw	,054	,167	1,667	,097	,534	1,872
	mv inter	-,088	-,278	-,534	,594	,020	50,074
	pw inter2	-,040	-,153	-,836	,404	,160	6,231

a. Dependent Variable: Correct Responses for Real News (weighted)