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The normative value of political entertainment: Deliberative antecedents and consequences of media users' entertainment experiences

Der normative Wert politischer Unterhaltung: Deliberative Bedingungen und Wirkungen des Unterhaltungserlebens von Mediennutzerinnen und -nutzern

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Abstract: This paper aims to explore the normative antecedents and consequences of media users' entertainment experiences during exposure to political media content. More specifically, it builds upon two-process models of entertainment and deliberative democratic theory in order to conceptualize how certain normative content criteria of political media might contribute to entertainment experiences of media users on the one hand. On the other hand, it investigates how these experiences might contribute to internal deliberative thought processes. The suggested effects and relationships are tested through two empirical studies relying on survey data, one with an experimental and one with a correlational design. Taken together, the studies offer mixed results with regard to the effects that deliberative content criteria may have on entertainment experiences. However, both studies show that eudaimonic entertainment experiences, in particular, have positive effects on deliberative thought processes of citizens.

Keywords: Political entertainment, entertainment experiences, mediated deliberation, internal deliberation, deliberative democracy

Zusammenfassung: Dieser Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit den normativen Bedingungen und Wirkungen des Unterhaltungserlebens von Mediennutzerinnen und -nutzern im Kontext politischer Medieninhalte. Auf Basis von Zwei-Prozess-Modellen der Unterhaltung sowie der deliberativen Demokratietheorie wird dabei zum einen ausgearbeitet, inwiefern sich spezifische normative Merkmale politischer Medienangebote auf das Unterhaltungserleben von Mediennutzer/-innen auswirken. Zum anderen wird untersucht, inwiefern dieses Unterhaltungserleben zu internen deliberativen Denkprozessen beitragen kann. Überprüft werden die theoretisch hergeleiteten Effekte und Zusammenhänge durch zwei Befragungsstudien, von denen eine experimentell, die andere korrelativ angelegt ist. Insgesamt ergeben sich aus den Studien gemischte Befunde im Hinblick auf die Auswirkung deliberativer in-

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haltlicher Merkmale auf das Unterhaltungserleben von Rezipient/-innen. Allerdings zeigen beide Studien, dass sich insbesondere das eudaimonische Unterhaltungserleben von Mediennutzer/-innen positiv auf deliberative Denkprozesse auswirkt.

Schlagwörter: Politische Unterhaltung, Unterhaltungserfahrungen, medienvermittelte Deliberation, interne Deliberation, deliberative Demokratietheorie

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, entertainment research has expanded its focus from prototypical entertainment media, such as comedies, to a broad spectrum of media types and formats (e.g., Oliver & Raney, 2014). Most recently, current theoretical approaches on how to conceptualize entertainment – so called two-process models of entertainment experiences (e.g., Vorderer & Reinecke, 2015) – have also been introduced into research on political media formats (e.g., Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Roth, 2016; Weinmann, 2017). Generally, studies in the field of political entertainment research have mainly focused on the effects of entertainment processes during exposure to political media (e.g., Baumgartner & Morris, 2008; Holbert, Hill, & Lee, 2014). Although rather implicitly, most of the studies seem to expect such media to have certain 'favorable' outcomes on the audience, and evaluate specific effects to be either positive or negative from a democratic perspective (e.g., Hmielowski, Holbert, & Lee, 2011; Kim & Vishak, 2008; LaMarre, Landreville, Young, & Gilkerson, 2014).

However, whereas it may well be reasonable to state that, for example, an increase in media users' political knowledge is a positive consequence, it will still remain an assertion if it lacks a solid theoretical basis which qualifies this and other effects as "good" or "bad" in a democratic meaning. In other words, normative democratic theories are needed in order to properly evaluate the effects of political entertainment (Althaus, 2012; Holbert, 2013; Williams & Delli Carpini, 2011). The same applies to the media content: It requires specific normative standards to assess its democratic quality (e.g., Althaus, 2012; Strömbäck, 2005). However, whereas this normative assessment of the content is certainly an important end in itself political entertainment research needs to address further questions to bring the argument full circle: First, we need to know how specific content characteristics that may be desirable from a normative viewpoint contribute to media users' entertainment experiences, and second, how these entertainment experiences might then promote democratically favorable effects.

The present article aims to address both of these questions by introducing one specific normative democratic theory into political entertainment research: *deliberative democracy* (e.g., Bohman & Rehg, 1999; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Habermas, 1994). More specifically, it will adopt specific ideas of a research program that builds on deliberative democratic theory in order to assess the mass media's deliberative value: *mediated deliberation research* (e.g., Rinke, 2016). Studies in this area mainly assess the content and production of various media outlets. From this research, three deliberative criteria – justification, responsiveness, and civility – will be derived as democratically desirable characteristics of media content. Yet, the normative claims made by mediated deliberation scholars do similarly

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affect media users: Broadly speaking, they are expected to critically engage with the political issues covered by the media (e.g., Gastil, 2008; Page, 1996). Within political theory, this form of critical engagement has also been referred to as "deliberation within" (Goodin, 2000, 2003), and will be the focus of this paper with respect to the effect side of political entertainment. This seems specifically necessary because concerning the actual effects of mediated deliberation there is only limited research so far. Thus, taking the normative standards of this tradition into account and theoretically connecting them to entertainment experiences might not only help to strengthen the normative value of political entertainment. Taking a closer look on some of its consequences could also lend further support to the practical and normative significance of the idea of mediated deliberation.

2. Entertainment experiences during media consumption: Current state of research

In media psychological research, entertainment is commonly defined in terms of the users' experiences while consuming media products. Following this perspective, the present article defines political entertainment as the *experience of individuals while using media with political content*. According to recent conceptualizations, entertainment experiences can be described via two types of processes (e.g., Lewis, Tamborini, & Weber, 2014; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010; Vorderer & Reinecke, 2015; Wirth, Hofer, & Schramm, 2012). The first one is based on seeking for a positive affective state or pleasure and mostly referred to as *hedonic* entertainment experiences or *enjoyment* (e.g., Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004). For example, one may speak of hedonic *political* entertainment if a person has fun while watching a political satire show on television. The second type of processes is usually called *eudaimonic* entertainment experiences or *appreciation* and is explained through two different theoretical approaches: One relies on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and conceptualizes eudaimonic entertainment as emerging from the fulfillment of the three basic intrinsic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (e.g., Tamborini et al., 2011; Vorderer & Ritterfeld, 2009); the other one defines it through a form of eudaimonic well-being that is based on meaningful experiences (e.g., Oliver, 2008; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010; Schramm & Wirth, 2008). Following this, eudaimonic *political* entertainment may occur if a person reads a newspaper article about ongoing coalition talks in her or his country and feels competent because she or he has learned something about the current political situation.

Whereas scholars agree on this two-dimensionality of entertainment experiences, there are different views on how enjoyment and appreciation might be related to each other (Roth, 2016; Roth et al., 2017). At least with respect to political entertaining media, however, the results of a recent study by Roth et al. (2017) indicate a hierarchical relationship in which hedonic entertainment experiences may precede the eudaimonic form. Furthermore, their results suggest a curvilinear relationship: If the level of enjoyment is low or high, appreciation will be less likely to occur in individuals. Rather, a medium level of enjoyment represents the

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optimal conditions for appreciation to arise. The study also investigated how entertainment experiences might be associated to different forms of information processing as suggested by psychological dual-process models (Gawronski & Creighton, 2013). The findings supported previous suggestions that appreciation is positively related to a more elaborate way of processing information (e.g., Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Knop-Hülß, Rieger, & Schneider, 2017; Lewis et al., 2014; Vorderer & Reinecke, 2012). For enjoyment, the findings were less conclusive. However, previous research suggests that enjoyment is associated with a less effortful form of information processing (e.g., Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Lewis et al., 2014; Vorderer & Reinecke, 2012).

3. Deliberation and the media: Normative demands on the content and the audience

The term deliberative democracy refers to a family of theories (for overviews see e.g., Dryzek, 2000; Fishkin & Laslett, 2003; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004), which – similarly to other normative democratic traditions (see e.g., Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002) – set specific demands with respect to the political processes in a democratic society. The present article will adopt the ideas of deliberative democracy in order to derive normative standards with regard to the content and effects of political entertainment. There are several reasons why this normative tradition might be most fruitful and suitable. To begin with, the deliberative model has been developed with the specific intention to combine the (allgedly) best qualities of competing models, that is, the demand for popular inclusion from the liberal tradition and the call for a civil discourse from the republican model (Habermas, 1994). It might be due to this fact that, since the so-called "deliberative turn" (Dryzek, 2000), the deliberative model is by far the most popular one which has attracted the highest amount of scholarly research. As a result, compared to other normative traditions, there is compelling empirical evidence for its democratic value. For example, the deliberative standard of engaging with others' opinions (i.e., responsiveness) has been shown to promote political tolerance (Mutz, 2002). As another consequence of its popularity, the deliberative model is the only one that has been explicitly applied to the study of political communication via the mass media. Because the mass media play a key role in today's political communication processes (e.g., Bennett & Entman, 2001; Street, 2011), the concept of *mediated deliberation* has initially been introduced by Page (1996) as a modern alternative to interpersonal deliberation. Following this idea, several scholars have offered suggestions on how to translate the normative claims stated by deliberative theorists into such criteria that can serve as tools to assess the normative value of media products (e.g., Ferree et al., 2002; Steenbergen, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steiner, 2003; Wessler & Rinke, 2014).

The present study will adopt criteria which have been proposed by authors who mainly rely on Habermas' idea of deliberative democracy (e.g., 1994, 2006). More specifically, the focus lies on three criteria which refer to the question of *how* political issues should be discussed in the media (e.g., Bennett et al., 2004;

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Ferree et al., 2002; Rinke, 2016; Wessler, 2008): One criterion is *justification*. It refers to the expectation that a mediated discourse not only presents mere claims and opinions on a specific issue. Rather, every claim or opinion should be supported by substantive arguments and reasons that help to justify and understand the particular rationale. A second demand is *responsiveness*: It is expected that speakers, or rather their claims and opinions, respond to each other in an active and substantive way. This criterion thus implies a dialogic discussion in which opposing parties engage with each other's viewpoints. Third, *civility* is regarded as a crucial characteristic of mediated discourses. This criterion denotes norms like mutual respect and politeness or, defined in negative terms, it entails that communicative acts should be free from offensive speech and personal attacks.

The idea of integrating deliberation into the mass media is of course not regarded as an end in itself but rather expected to have certain favorable effects on the audience (e.g., Gastil, 2008; Mutz, 2008; Wessler, 2008). From a more traditional deliberative perspective, the ultimate goal is to encourage citizens to actively engage in the political discourses of a society (e.g., Habermas, 2006). However, demands on citizens as media users start at a somewhat lower level: First of all, they are expected to learn about political issues from the media as well as to critically reflect about these issues in a deliberative way (e.g., Gastil, 2008; Page, 1996). Generally speaking, these demands cover specific cognitive processes of individuals. Apart from mediated deliberation research, such deliberative thought processes have been referred to as "private deliberation" (Mercier & Landemore, 2012) or "deliberation within" (Goodin, 2000, 2003). Basically, these processes might be regarded as the key elements of citizen deliberation (e.g., Fishkin, 2011; Mansbridge, 2015; Rosenberg, 2014): taking others' viewpoints, considering different opinions on political issues, as well as finding and evaluating arguments and counter-arguments surrounding these issues (Goodin, 2000, 2003; Mercier & Landemore, 2012).

From a normative point of view, such internal deliberation can certainly not compensate for interpersonal discussions, which many deliberative theorists would undoubtedly still defend as the ideal form of deliberation. Nevertheless, it can or even should be seen as a prerequisite of further deliberative actions (Goodin, 2000; Mercier & Landemore, 2012). Besides, this internal form of deliberation may constitute a direct and probably more realistic effect of media exposure. The present study will therefore focus on these deliberative thought processes as a possible effect of media users' entertainment experiences during exposure to political media content.

4. Deliberation as antecedent and consequence of entertainment experiences

4.1 Effects of mediated deliberation on entertainment experiences

Previous research on mediated deliberation has mainly focused on the content of different media products, assessing their normative value in terms of the degree of deliberativeness (e.g., Rinke, 2016). Studies on how mediated deliberation affects audiences are rare, especially when it comes to the specific effects of different de-

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liberative criteria (Mutz, 2008). This particularly applies to the criteria of justification and responsiveness. One exception is a recent study by van der Wurff, Swert, and Lecheler (2016) which found the level of justification in online news to increase people's argument repertoire. Another one is a study by Lu and Myrick (2016) on the exposure to news posts on *Facebook*. The authors showed that cross-cutting exposure (i.e., exposure to dissonant views), which might to some degree imply a responsive discussion, encourages users to engage in political activities such as political discussions.

Obviously, these findings give us no direct advice on the question how justification and responsiveness might influence media users' feeling of being entertained by the media. However, taken together, they point into the direction that a high level of justification and responsiveness in mediated discussions might be able to involve media users politically and to help them gain a deeper understanding of political issues. Considering what a highly deliberative mediated discourse entails this seems logical: Such a discourse implies a critical discussion of different opinions as well as substantive reasons that speak for and against these opinions. When following such a discussion, media users are given the opportunity to gain a comprehensive and detailed understanding of a political issue. As a result, they might experience a feeling of being competent and gain deeper insights about their own attitudes and beliefs – processes which are both integral components of eudaimonic entertainment experiences (e.g., Oliver & Bartsch, 2010; Vorderer & Ritterfeld, 2009; Wirth et al., 2012). Recent research on how the level of complexity of media content (i.e., the degree of cognitive, behavioral, and affective challenges it poses on users) corresponds with enjoyment and appreciation supports this assumption. According to this research, media users are more likely to experience appreciation if a media product features a high level of complexity (Bartsch & Hartmann, 2017; Hartmann, 2013). For example, a high level of complexity and cognitive challenge has been suggested to arise from dissonant information which media users need to process and integrate into their existing attitudes (e.g., Bartsch & Hartmann, 2015; Lewis et al., 2014). It might be reasonable to assume that high levels of justification and responsiveness would result in a rather complex mediated discourse which confronts the audience with intense cognitive challenges. Based on these assumptions, the following hypotheses are derived:

H1a: Justification has a positive influence on eudaimonic entertainment experiences.

H2a: Responsiveness has a positive influence on eudaimonic entertainment experiences.

Considering the implications of these criteria for hedonic entertainment experiences, the situation might be different. In contrast to appreciation, enjoyment has been suggested to rather correspond with a medium or even low level of complexity in media content (Bartsch & Hartmann, 2017; Hartmann, 2013). But, as argued above, high levels of justification and responsiveness most likely result in a highly complex mediated discourse, posing considerable cognitive challenges on the audience. This might rather conflict with experiences that are characteristic

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for enjoyment: fun, pleasure, and relaxation (Vorderer et al., 2004). However, at the other extreme, media users are confronted with a discourse absent of any exchange of opinions and arguments, that is, one which does not pose any cognitive challenges to them. As a consequence, they might rather feel bored and mentally fatigued. Similarly to stress, boredom and fatigue have been argued to be incompatible with hedonic entertainment experiences (Vorderer et al., 2004; Zillmann, 1988). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1b: Justification has a curvilinear influence on hedonic entertainment experiences in the form that hedonic entertainment experiences are highest at a medium level of justification.

H2b: Responsiveness has a curvilinear influence on hedonic entertainment experiences in the form that hedonic entertainment experiences are highest at a medium level of responsiveness.

In contrast to justification and responsiveness, there are several empirical studies on the effects that incivility may have on media users. For example, studies on incivility in political discussions online showed that it can have positive effects on political participation, but that it also induces negative feelings like anger, aversion, and anxiety, and has negative effects on political efficacy (Borah, 2013, 2014; Gervais, 2014; Lu & Myrick, 2016). Further studies found that incivility decreases trust in political actors (Borah, 2013; Mutz, 2007; Mutz & Reeves, 2005) and that uncivil arguments in a televised debate were judged as less legitimate by viewers (Mutz, 2007). These findings in particular may give an idea of how incivility should affect appreciation: If the participants of a mediated discussion are not trusted and their arguments are not considered valuable it will be difficult for media users to feel related to them, to judge the discussion as meaningful, and to gain deeper insights – experiences which are central components of eudaimonic entertainment (e.g., Oliver & Bartsch, 2010; Wirth et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is obvious that an uncivil political discussion violates norms like mutual respect and politeness (e.g., Calhoun, 2000; Kingwell, 1995). However, the perception of such values being fulfilled has also been suggested to be a central element of media users' eudaimonic entertainment experiences (e.g., Wirth et al., 2012). From these arguments, the following hypothesis is derived:

H3a: Civility has a positive influence on eudaimonic entertainment experiences.

Previous findings on the effects of incivility might also help to answer the question how hedonic entertainment experiences may be affected by this criterion. According to different studies, an uncivil discourse leads to increased arousal levels in viewers of televised debates (Mutz, 2007; Mutz & Reeves, 2005) and readers of political blogs (Muddiman, 2011). Furthermore, the participants in these studies judged uncivil discourses to be more entertaining than civil ones. Following the authors, this may be seen as a consequence of their higher arousal level. In entertainment theory, too, moderate arousal has been used as an explanatory process for entertainment experiences, more precisely the hedonic type (e.g., Zillmann, 1988). In fact, it might be reasonable that a specific degree of uncivil be-

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havior leads to excitation, amusement, and probably even suspense among the audience – processes which constitute hedonic entertainment experiences (Vorderer et al., 2004). For example, viewers might be pleased and probably even thrilled to see a candidate attacking her or his opponent in a presidential debate on television. The emerging conflict might lead to suspense among the audience, which should clearly contribute to enjoyment (e.g., Vorderer et al., 2004). Still, there might be a tipping point in this relationship. Imagine, for example, that in such a debate the candidates, instead of discussing respectfully, continuously shout at and interrupt each other. Whereas viewers might enjoy watching such a behavior for a few minutes, they may be annoyed, exhausted, or even disgusted after a while. As a consequence, it may be assumed that a high level of incivility conflicts with hedonic entertainment experiences. This also corresponds to the assumption that not a high but rather a moderate level of arousal is optimal in order to enjoy a specific media content (Zillmann, 1988). Thus, the last hypothesis on the effects of the deliberative criteria reads:

H3b: Civility has a curvilinear influence on hedonic entertainment experiences in the form that hedonic entertainment experiences are highest at a medium level of civility.

4.2 Effects of entertainment experiences on internal deliberative processes

The remaining question is how hedonic and eudaimonic experiences might contribute to internal deliberative processes as one favorable outcome of mediated deliberation. The previously suggested relationships between the two forms of entertainment experiences and dual-process models of information processing (e.g., Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Vorderer & Reinecke, 2012) might be indicative in this context. According to these suggestions, in terms of the heuristic systematic model (HSM, Chaiken, 1980), enjoyment corresponds with heuristic information processing, whereas appreciation is rather linked to systematic processing. Recent empirical studies point into the direction that entertainment experiences are the determining factors in these relationships, that is, enjoyment and appreciation result in the different forms of information processing (Bartsch, Kalch, & Oliver, 2014; Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Knop-Hülß et al., 2017; Roth et al., 2017; Schneider, Weinmann, Roth, Knop, & Vorderer, 2016).

Most apparently, internal deliberative thought processes – or in short terms "deliberation within" (Goodin, 2000, 2003) – represent a rather sophisticated way of thinking. Thus, they might depend on or be closely connected to a systematic processing strategy. This assumption is supported by a recent empirical study on the development of a measurement instrument for deliberation within (Weinmann, 2018). Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that deliberation within is negatively associated with a heuristic information processing strategy. Taken together, these findings support the notion that eudaimonic entertainment experiences may not only be catalysts for a systematic processing of information,

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but also for deliberation within.[1] At the same time, deliberation within may rather be impeded by hedonic entertainment experiences, as they have been suggested to induce a heuristic information processing strategy (e.g., Bartsch & Schneider, 2014). Thus, the last two hypotheses read as follows:

H4: Hedonic entertainment experiences have a negative influence on deliberation within.

H5: Eudaimonic entertainment experiences have a positive influence on deliberation within.

The stated hypotheses result in a model that assumes the influence of justification, responsiveness, and civility on deliberation within to be fully mediated by hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment experiences (Figure 1). Thus, direct effects from the deliberative criteria on deliberation within are not hypothesized. The underlying rationale is tied to the notion that, as already mentioned before, the type of entertainment experiences (i.e., hedonic or eudaimonic) determines whether hedonic or systematic processing occurs during media exposure (Bartsch et al., 2014; Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Knop-Hülß et al., 2017; Roth et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2016). More specifically, the mentioned studies do not only suggest this causal direction. Empirical results also supported the assumption that entertainment experiences would fully mediate the effects of (political) media content on cognitions like the development of issue interest (e.g., Bartsch et al., 2014; Bartsch & Schneider, 2014). Consequently, the mediating role of entertainment experiences is also assumed in this context.

1 Although deliberation within might be closely connected to systematic processing, the two concepts have several differences which are discussed in detail in an earlier contribution co-authored by the author of this paper (Weinmann & Vorderer, 2018). Most importantly, deliberation within sets its focus on aspects that are relevant from a deliberative viewpoint, for example, the consideration and evaluation of different opinions on a political issue. Such aspects may but must not be included in systematic information processing. This similarly affects the relationship between deliberation within and eudaimonic entertainment: Both concepts share the aspect of considering and thinking. However, as for eudaimonic entertainment this is only one aspect of the concept and in its scope rather general. This thinking might be about the political issue dealt with in the respective media content, but it might also be about the actors included, about the music (in case of audiovisual media content) or about something completely different. Deliberation within, in contrast, comprises far more specific types of thinking which are clearly connected to the political issue dealt with in the respective media content. The difference between the concepts also becomes apparent from their operationalizations, which are included in Appendix B.

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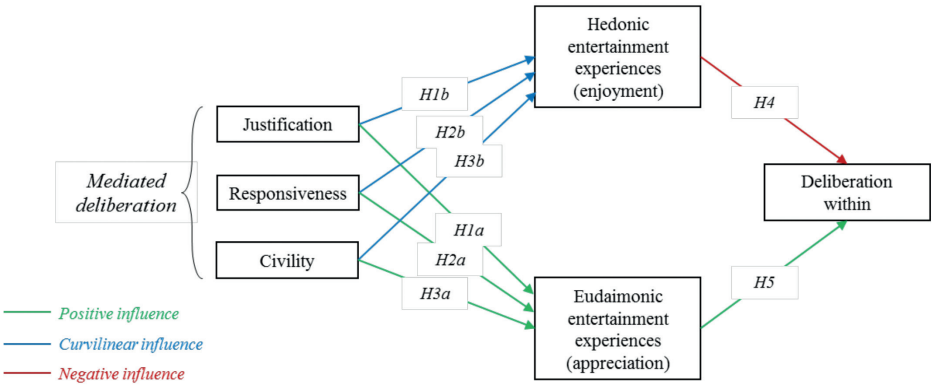

Figure 1. Graphic overview of the hypotheses.

5. Study 1

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Design and experimental stimuli

In the first study, a 3×3×3 (justification, responsiveness, and civility, each low vs. medium vs. high) between-subjects experimental design including a pre- and a post-test questionnaire was employed. For the 27 conditions, a newspaper article was manipulated by the researcher with respect to the three levels of the three deliberative criteria. To increase ecological validity, an article which has actually been published in the online version of the German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* (Rövekamp, 2016) was chosen as a basis. Written material was chosen over audiovisual material as it contains less potentially confounding variables (e.g., music) and is easier to manipulate. The article dealt with the issue of unconditional basic income, an idea according to which all citizens would receive a certain amount of money from the government independent from whether and what they are working. This topic was chosen because it is an idea reflected in the programs of various political parties in Germany and is therefore featured in the public debate from time to time. However, the discussion is still controversial, and a political decision seems rather unlikely in the near future. Therefore, it was expected to be an issue that still leaves room for citizens' opinion-making and reflection – in other words, deliberation within was expected to be more likely concerning this issue than for other ones that have already entered the political decision-making process.

The strategy for the manipulation was developed based on prior research in the area of mediated deliberation. In this research, the normative quality of media content (i.e., its deliberativeness in form of the level of justification, responsiveness, civility, etc.) is usually judged by "hard" criteria and through quantitative content analyses. In order to be in line with this logic, the manipulation was based on previous efforts to operationalize the deliberative criteria for content analyses of media material (e.g., Bennett et al., 2004; Ferree et al., 2002; Rinke, Wessler, Löb, &

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Weinmann, 2013; Rohlinger, 2007; Wessler, 2008; Wessler & Rinke, 2014). Following this literature, justification was operationalized as a reason or argument that is provided to justify a claim or position on an issue of societal and/or political relevance. Responsiveness was operationalized in two steps: First, an actor had to refer to another actor's claim or position, and second s/he had to provide a counter-claim or counter-position. Civility was defined as the presence of mutual respect and a "good tone". Following previous approaches, civility was operationalized and manipulated inversely, that is, in terms of the level of incivility. An utterance was determined to be uncivil based on the following indicators: the use of swear words, personal attacks on another actor, and/or a derogatory use of language (e.g., sarcasm or irony). Nevertheless, for the data analyses the level of civility, as also reflected in the hypotheses, was considered (i.e., the low condition for civility corresponds with the high level of incivility as manipulated in the article and vice versa). In order to create the 27 conditions for the experiment, the original newspaper article was first coded with respect to its original levels of justification, responsiveness, and civility. Second, the original levels were increased or decreased in order to yield the different conditions. Specifically, equal distances between the three conditions of each independent variable were created.[2]

5.1.2 Manipulation check

Because deliberative qualities and thus objective or rather manifest media attributes were the independent variables in this study it would have been inadequate to take participants' evaluation of the material as the manipulation check (e.g., O'Keefe, 2003; Tao & Bucy, 2007). Therefore, and in order to conform to the common methodology in mediated deliberation research, the manipulation check was conducted in form of a content analytic approach. Thus, to validate the manipulation conducted by the researcher the 27 stimuli were coded by the researcher as well as by two student coders. As unit of analysis the paragraphs as they had already been set in the original article were used (i.e., 14 paragraphs). For each paragraph the occurrence of justification, responsiveness, and incivility (i.e., the inverse of civility, see above) was coded.[3] After participating in several training sessions with other newspaper articles, the two student coders were given the 27 articles in a randomized order so that it would be unlikely for them to identify the different conditions. Intercoder reliability was assessed through Krippendorff's α (Krippendorff, 2004), which was calculated using the SPSS macro KALPHA (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). The results indicated acceptable agreement between the coders: Intercoder reliability was $\alpha = .80$ for justification, $\alpha = .73$ for responsiveness, and $\alpha = .94$ for (in-)civility. Thus, the manipulation was considered successful.

2 In detail, the manipulations were as follows: two justified out of four claims in total (low level of justification) vs. five justified out of twelve claims in total (medium level of justification) vs. eight justified out of 20 claims in total (high level of justification); one occurrence of responsiveness (low level) vs. four occurrences of responsiveness (medium level) vs. seven occurrences of responsiveness (high level); one uncivil utterance (low level of civility) vs. four uncivil utterances (medium level of incivility) vs. seven uncivil utterances (high level of incivility).

3 With respect to incivility, for example, the value was "0" if there was no uncivil utterance in one paragraph and "2" if there were two uncivil utterances in one paragraph.

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5.1.3 Participants and procedure

The experiment was conducted online, using the software EFS Survey. The participants were members of SoSci Panel, an open scientific survey panel with more than 90,000 German speaking subscribers (Leiner, 2012). To approximately determine the minimum sample size for the study, several a priori power analyses (i.e., for the different paths included in the model) were conducted using the tool G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). Given a statistical power of $1–\beta = .80$, a significance level of $\alpha = .05$, and medium effect sizes between $r = .10$ and $r = .30$ the planned total N for the study was at least 810 participants. Based on this sample size planning, 6,954 persons were invited to the study via e-mail. 1,628 persons clicked on the link to the study, and 1,366 of them completed the questionnaire. After sorting out participants who indicated that they had not read the entire article ($n = 208$), answered "yes" or "not sure" when asked whether they had already known the article ($n = 43$ and $n = 97$), and/or named other reasons for not using their data ($n = 29$), the sample consisted of 1,039 participants. Of these, a further 61 participants were excluded because they spent less than five minutes on the page on which the article was shown. The resulting final sample included 978 participants (N).[4] They were on average 42.52 years old ($SD = 16.10$, $Min = 17$, $Max = 87$), 56.3 % of them were female, and they had a rather high educational background (high school degree: 16.9 %, university degree: 53.2 %, doctoral degree: 7.2 %).

After clicking on the link to the questionnaire, the participants were exposed to a welcome page and were then asked to insert a personalized code. Subsequently, they were asked whether they had heard about the issue of unconditional basic income before and, if yes, to evaluate the importance of this issue and their knowledge about it. After answering several questions about their political predispositions (i.e., political interest and efficacy) they were randomly assigned to one of the 27 newspaper articles, which they were asked to read thoroughly. Entertainment experiences and deliberation within were assessed thereafter, followed by participants' assessment of the article's degrees of justification, responsiveness, and civility. Questions about their need to evaluate, need for cognition, and sociodemographic data completed the questionnaire. Last, participants were asked various control questions (e.g., whether they had really read the article) and thanked and informed about the manipulated nature of the articles.

5.1.4 Measures

Dependent variables. Hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment experiences were measured using six items from the audience response scale by Oliver and Bartsch (2010).[5] These items were found to be a reliable measure for political entertainment experiences (Weinmann, Schneider, Roth, Bindl, & Vorderer, 2016). For he-

4 The size of the experimental groups ranged from 28 to 44 persons.

5 The German version of the items was retrieved from Schneider, Bartsch, and Oliver (2017). The item wording can be found in Appendix B.

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donic entertainment experiences, the 3-item subscale Fun was applied. McDonald's omega was calculated as a reliability estimate for each scale that comprises at least three items. The values including the bootstrap 95% confidence intervals (CIs) are displayed in Table 1. Eudaimonic entertainment experiences were assessed through the 3-item subscale Appreciation. Deliberation within was assessed through the 5-item scale developed by Weinmann (2018).[6] All of the mentioned items were measured on 5-point Likert scales from 1 (*does not apply at all*) to 5 (*applies completely*).

Covariates, additional variables, and sociodemographics. To identify relevant covariates with respect to participants' entertainment experiences the results of previous studies in the area of political entertainment were taken into consideration. Specifically, external political efficacy has been found to influence enjoyment, while internal political efficacy, political interest, and sex have been found to have an impact on appreciation (Roth, Weinmann, Schneider, Hopp, & Vorderer, 2014; Weinmann, 2017). With respect to deliberation within the selection of covariates was also based on previous empirical results. It has been found to be associated with political interest, internal political efficacy, need for cognition, need to evaluate, as well as individual's knowledge about and involvement into the political issue that they deliberated on (Weinmann, 2018).

Table 1. Values for McDonald's omega (ωh) including the Bootstrap 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for the scales used in Study 1 and 2

	Study 1 (N = 978)		Study 2 (N = 403)	
Scale	ω_h	bootstrap 95% CI	ω_h	bootstrap 95% CI
Hedonic entertainment experiences	.88	[.86, .89]	.96	[.94, .97]
Eudaimonic entertainment experiences	.73	[.70, .76]	.76	[.70, .80]
Deliberation within	.83	[.81, .85]	.89	[.87, .91]
Perceived level of responsiveness	.68	[.64, .71]	.80	[.76, .83]
Perceived level of civility	.92	[.90, .93]	.76	[.69, .93]
Political interest	.92	[.91, .93]	—	—
Need to evaluate	.75	[.72, .77]	—	—
Need for cognition	.58	[.53, .63]	—	—

Note. The values for McDonald's ω_h were calculated using the statistical software R (R Core Team, 2017) and the package coefficientalpha (Zhang & Yuan, 2015) with 1,000 bootstrap samples.

To measure political interest, the 5-item Short Scale Political Interest (SSPI; Otto & Bacherle, 2011) was employed. Political efficacy was assessed using the Political Efficacy Short Scale (PEKS; Beierlein, Kemper, Kovaleva, & Rammstedt, 2012) which comprises four items, two measuring internal and two measuring external political efficacy. As recommended by Eisinga, te Grotenhuis, and Pelzer (2013), the Spearman-Brown coefficient ρ was calculated as a reliability estimate for the two-item measures. The values were ρ = .80 for internal and ρ = .71 for external

6 The item wording of the deliberation within measurement can be found in Apprendix B.

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political efficacy. Participants' need to evaluate was, as suggested by Schneider (2012), measured through six items from the scale developed by Jarvis and Petty (1996). A 4-item short scale developed by Beißert, Köhler, Rempel, and Beierlein (2014) was employed to assess their need for cognition. All of those covariates were measured on 5-point Likert scales from 1 (*does not apply at all*) to 5 (*applies completely*). To measure participants' knowledge about the issue they were asked to indicate how well they felt informed about it on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*very poorly*) to 5 (*very good*). Issue involvement was operationalized as the participants' perceived importance of the issue, which they were asked to evaluate on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*very unimportant*) to 5 (*very important*).

Besides, participants were asked to rate the article they had read with regard to its levels of justification, responsiveness, and civility. To the author's best knowledge, there had been no prior measurements for these variables. Therefore, specific items were developed based on the theoretical definitions and previous operationalizations of the three deliberative criteria (see above). The level of justification was assessed through two items. The value for the Spearman-Brown coefficient was $\rho = .86$. Three items each were employed to measure the levels of responsiveness and civility as perceived by the participants. As with the manipulation of the material, the level of civility was operationalized as the level of incivility. However, the scores were reversed before data analysis so that higher values represent higher levels of civility. The item wordings, the original German ones and the English translations, can be found in Appendix B. Last, participants were asked to indicate their age, sex, and education.

5.2 Results

To test the hypotheses 1 to 5, a path model was specified using the statistical software R (R Core Team, 2017) and the R package lavaan (Rosseel, 2012).[7] To model the predicted linear and curvilinear effects of justification, responsiveness, and civility on entertainment experiences, the categorical variables resulting from the manipulation of the articles (i.e., low vs. medium vs. high for each of the variables) were transformed through polynomial contrast coding (e.g., Davis, 2010; Thompson, 2006). Specifically, for the positive linear effects on appreciation (H1a, H2a, H3a) the values were –1 (low), 0 (medium) and +1 (high). For the curvilinear effects of the three deliberative criteria on enjoyment (H1b, H2b, and H3b), the values were –1 (low), 2 (medium), and –1 (high), which represents the assumed concave shape of the curve. Besides, the measured covariates were – based on the results of previous research (Roth et al., 2014; Weinmann, 2017, 2018) – included into the model as follows: external political efficacy as predictor of enjoyment, political interest, internal political efficacy, and sex as covariates predicting appreciation, and political interest, internal and external political efficacy, need to evaluate and need for cognition, as well as issue knowledge and involvement as further predictors of deliberation within. Correlations between the covariates were modeled according to theoretical considerations.

7 If not specified otherwise further analyses were conducted using SPSS 24.0 by IBM Corp. (2016).

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Maximum-likelihood (ML) estimation was used to fit the model. However, because the assumption of multivariate normality of the data was violated, the analysis relied on robust ML estimation and the Satorra-Bentler rescaled chi-square statistic (SB χ^2, Satorra & Bentler, 1994; Yuan, Bentler, & Zhang, 2005).[8] To evaluate model fit the following indices and cutoff values were used (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schweizer, 2010): the model chi-square, the Robust Comparative Fit Index (rCFI; ≥ .95), the Robust Tucker-Lewis Index (rTLI; ≥ .95), the Robust Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (rRMSEA; ≤ .06), and the Standardized Root Mean Square of Residuals (SRMR; ≤ .08). The analysis of the initial path model specified as described above revealed an acceptable fit, SB χ^2 = 350.64, *df* = 85, *p* < .001, rCFI = .97, rTLI = .95, rRMSEA = .06 [90 % CI: .05, .06]), SRMR = .05. However, the results showed that only political interest as well as internal and external political efficacy had significant influences on the dependent variables deliberation within, enjoyment, and appreciation. To obtain a more parsimonious model only the significant paths of the covariates on these variables were retained (see Figure 2). This re-specification resulted in an even better model fit, SB χ^2 = 44.35, *df* = 35, *p* = .134, rCFI = .99, rTLI = .99, rRMSEA = .02 [90 % CI: .00, .03]), SRMR = .02.

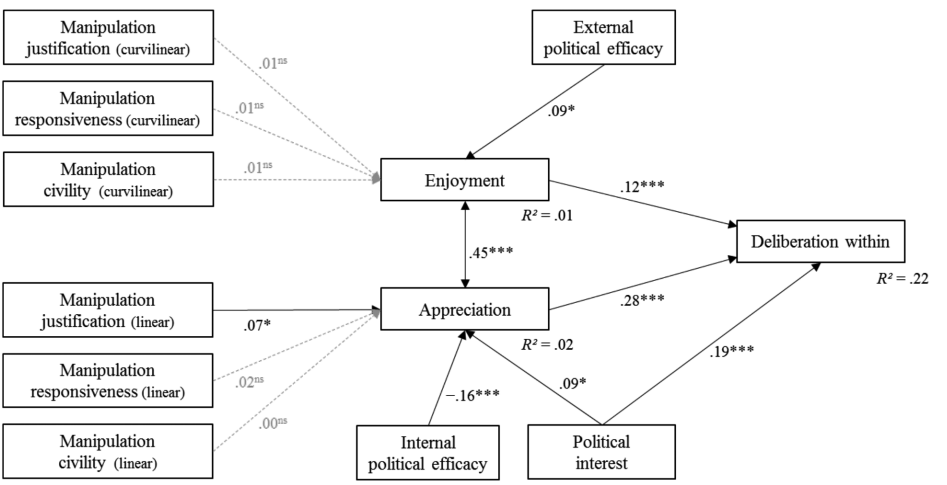

Figure 2. Final path model of Study 1. *N* = 978. Scores are unstandardized coefficients. * *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. * *p* < .001. Although not visualized covariances between all of the covariates were included in the model.**

Turning to the first set of hypotheses focusing on the effects of justification on entertainment experiences, the path from this criterion to enjoyment (modeled as a curvilinear trend) was not significant (*B* = .01, *p* = .653). In contrast, the linear effect of justification on appreciation was significant (*B* = .07, *p* < .05). These findings support H1a but not H1b. With regard to responsiveness, both effects,

8 The assumption was tested through Mardia's Multivariate Normality Test using the R package MVN developed by Korkmaz, Goksuluk, and Zararsiz (2014).

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the curvilinear one on enjoyment and the linear one on appreciation, were not significant (B = .01, p = .776 and B = .02, p = .457). The same was found for the effects of civility on entertainment experiences (curvilinear effect on enjoyment: B = .01, p = .728, linear effect on appreciation: B = .00, p = .963). Therefore, H2a, H2b, H3a, and H3b could not be supported by the results of the model. The remaining hypotheses focused on the effects of entertainment experiences on deliberation within. As expected, both enjoyment and appreciation were significant predictors of deliberation within. However, the model revealed positive effects not only for appreciation (B = .28, p < .001) but also for enjoyment (B = .12, p < .001), thereby supporting H5 but not H4.

Because the manipulation of the deliberative criteria did, with one exception, not reveal significant influences on participants' entertainment experiences further analyses were conducted. Specifically, it was presumed that possibly enjoyment and appreciation might rather be influenced by the degree to which the participants *perceived* the deliberative criteria to be fulfilled or not in the article they had read. To address this speculation, a hierarchical regression model with forced entry (e.g., Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003) was conducted for each form of entertainment experiences. In both models, the centered mean scores for the perceived levels of justification, responsiveness, and civility were entered in the first step. The centered mean scores of the three variables multiplied with itself (x^2) were entered in the second step. The results of the analyses are displayed in Table 2. As can be seen in the table, the curvilinear trends did not significantly predict the two forms of entertainment experiences, and regarding the perceived level of civility the linear trend was no significant predictor either. In contrast, the perceived level of justification was a significant positive predictor of both hedonic (B = .17, p <.001) and eudaimonic entertainment experiences (B = .27, p <.001). The same was found for the perceived level of responsiveness: It significantly and positively predicted enjoyment (B = .20, p <.001) as well as appreciation (B = .09, p <.01) in the final models.

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Table 2. Hierarchical regression analyses predicting entertainment experiences from perceived levels of justification, responsiveness, and civility

Predictor	Hedonic entertainment experiences (enjoyment)		Eudaimonic entertainment experiences (appreciation)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Block 1: Linear trends				
Perceived level of justification	.19***	.17***	.28***	.27***
Perceived level of responsiveness	.20***	.20***	.09**	.09**
Perceived level of civility	.01	.01	.02	.02
Δ R^2 (%)	11.6***		13.7***	
Block 2: Curvilinear trends				
Perceived level of justification x perceived level of justification		–.04		–.02
Perceived level of responsiveness x perceived level of responsiveness		–.02		–.01
Perceived level of civility x perceived level of civility		.00		–.04
Δ R^2 (%)		0.4		0.2
Total R^2 (%)		12.0***		13.8***

Note. N = 978. Scores are unstandardized regression weights. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

5.3 Discussion

The purpose of the first study was to empirically investigate the proposed relationships between the deliberative criteria of justification, responsiveness, and civility, entertainment experiences, and deliberation within. According to the results, both enjoyment and appreciation seem to have a positive influence on deliberation within, which only partially corresponds with what was predicted based on earlier insights. Contrary to expectations, the deliberativeness of the media material virtually had no effect on neither enjoyment nor appreciation. Rather, as revealed through additional analyses, both forms of entertainment experiences were influenced by how the participants perceived the deliberative ideals to be reflected in the articles they had read. To summarize, the study yielded several unexpected results. Considered carefully, this leaves us with a rather unstable scientific basis upon which any conclusions might easily be questioned. Therefore, to reassess the findings of this first study a second one was conducted.

6. Study 2

6.1 Method

5.1.1 Design and media material

The second study was supposed to test the relationships between *perceived* deliberativeness, entertainment experiences, and deliberation within. For these purposes, a correlational design was applied. Thus, the participants were all exposed

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to the same media content. Because it might be the most popular and most extensively researched type of political entertainment media, a political satire television show was chosen as an example. In particular, participants were shown a clip from the most popular German political satire program *heute-show* which might be best comparable to *The Daily Show* in the U.S. (for a detailed description of the German program see e.g., Kleinen-von Königslöw & Keel, 2012). The selected clip was 4:42 minutes long and originally part of the show that was broadcast on May 20, 2016. It dealt with the possible abolition of cash money in Germany, which was a rather controversial issue in the public debate at that time.

6.1.2 Participants and procedure

Again, the study was conducted via an online questionnaire using the software EFS Survey. To benefit from the individual data about the participants already collected in Study 1 (i.e., the covariates and sociodemographics) they were asked to participate in this second study as well. Thus, an e-mail invitation to the study was sent to those members of SoSci Panel who had already been invited to Study 1 and who had clicked on the link to its questionnaire (1,627 persons).[9] Of those, 1,160 persons clicked on the link to the questionnaire of this second study, and 1,046 participants completed the questionnaire. For 70 participants, EFS Survey reported that the video had not been played completely. They were removed from the sample. The same was done for those participants who reported by themselves that they had not watched the entire video (n = 70), answered "yes" or "not sure" when asked whether they had known the video before (n = 143 and n = 56), and/or gave specific reasons for not using their data (n = 11). As a last step, the resulting data was, based on the personalized codes, matched with the data of Study 1 in order to sort out those participants who only took part in this second study (n = 312). The final sample consisted of 403 participants (N). On average, they were 43.63 years old (SD = 15.35, Min = 18, Max = 81), and 58.1 % of them were female. Their educational background was, similar to Study 1, rather high (high school degree: 15.1 %, university degree: 55.3 %, doctoral degree: 6.7 %).

After the welcome page, participants were asked to insert the personalized code that they had already provided in Study 1. Like in Study 1, they were then asked various questions regarding the issue that was covered by the video (i.e., whether they had heard about it before and, if yes, how important it was to them, and how much they knew about it). Subsequently, they were directed to the page where they could start the video. Similar to Study 1, entertainment experiences, deliberation within, as well as the perceived degrees of justification, responsiveness, and civility were assessed thereafter. Various control questions (e.g., whether they had really watched the video) completed the questionnaire.

9 Like for Study 1, the numbers were obtained from the staff of SoSci Panel. Apparently, one participant quit her/his membership in the panel, which is why this number differs from the one mentioned in the description of Study 1.

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6.1.3 Measures

The exact same measurement instruments which had already been applied in Study 1 were used. Again, McDonald's omega was calculated to estimate the reliability of the scales with at least three items. The values are also included in Table 1. For the two items measuring the level of justification of the video as perceived by the participants the value for the Spearman-Brown coefficient was ρ = .87. As explained above, the measurements for the covariates that affect individual traits of the participants (i.e., political interest and efficacy, need to evaluate, and need for cognition) and participants' sociodemographics were retrieved and included from the data of Study 1.

6.2 Results

Like in Study 1, a path model using the statistical software R (R Core Team, 2017) and the R package lavaan (Rosseel, 2012) was specified. Following the results of Study 1, the perceived levels of justification, responsiveness, and civility were modeled as predictors of both forms of entertainment experiences. More specifically, the paths were modeled as linear trends. Apart from that, the model was similar to the first one specified in Study 1 (see Figure 3). The covariates (i.e., political interest, internal and external political efficacy, need to evaluate and need for cognition, and issue knowledge and involvement) were also included as described earlier. Also similar to Study 1, due to violation of multivariate normality of the data robust ML estimation was used and the SB χ^2 was calculated (Satorra & Bentler, 1994; Yuan et al., 2005). To evaluate model fit the fit indices and cutoff values were again (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schweizer, 2010): the model chi-square, the rCFI; (≥ .95), the rTLI (≥ .95), the rRMSEA (≤ .06), and the SRMR (≤ .08).

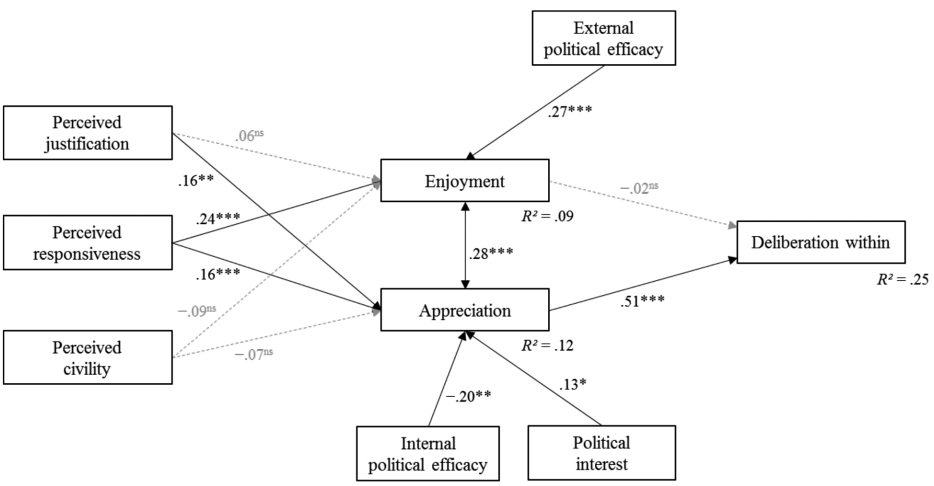

Figure 3. Final path model of Study 2. Scores are unstandardized coefficients. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Although not visualized covariances between all of the covariates were included in the model.

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The analysis yielded an acceptable model fit, SB χ^2 = 103.54, *df* = 52, *p* < .001, rCFI = .98, rTLI = .97, rRMSEA = .05 [90 % CI: .04, .06]), SRMR = .05. However, several paths from the covariates were again not significant. They were trimmed in order to receive a more parsimonious solution (see Figure 3). Although the fit of the model worsened, it was still largely acceptable, SB χ^2 = 45.50, *df* = 18, *p* < .001, rCFI = .95, rTLI = .91, rRMSEA = .06 [90 % CI: .04, .09]), SRMR = .05. Similar to Study 1, the perceived level of responsiveness was a significant predictor of both enjoyment (*B* = .24, *p* < .001) and appreciation (*B* = .16, *p* < .001), and that the perceived level of justification significantly predicted appreciation (*B* = .16, *p* < .01). However, in contrast to Study 1, the perceived level of justification did not have a significant influence on enjoyment (*B* = .08, *p* = .336). In line with Study 1, the perceived level of civility neither predicted enjoyment (*B* = –.09, *p* = .139) nor appreciation significantly (*B* = –.07, *p* = .146). Last, with regard to the effects of entertainment experiences on deliberation within, the results only partially supported the results of Study 1: Whereas appreciation was a significant positive predictor of deliberation within (*B* = .63, *p* < .001), enjoyment neither had a negative nor a positive significant influence (*B* = –.02, *p* = .732).

6.3 Discussion

The aim of this second study was to reassess the findings of Study 1. Most of them could be supported through the recent results: The level of responsiveness as perceived by the participants was positively related to hedonic as well as eudaimonic entertainment experiences, whereas for the perceived level of civility no relationship to entertainment experiences was found. Concerning the perceived level of justification, the positive relationship with eudaimonic entertainment experiences could be confirmed, whereas this was not the case for hedonic entertainment experiences. Similar to Study 1 and as theorized, a positive relationship between eudaimonic entertainment experiences and deliberation within was found. However, the results neither supported the positive relationship between hedonic entertainment experiences and deliberation within as found in Study 1 nor a negative relationship as predicted earlier. The implications of the two studies' findings considered as a whole will be discussed in the following.

7. General discussion

The overall goal of this research was to establish a constructive theoretical connection between deliberation and entertainment in and through the media and to examine this connection empirically. By this means, it did not only aim to further underline the normative and practical value of mediated deliberation (e.g., Rinke, 2016). Even more importantly, it intended to reveal the normative significance of entertainment processes in the context of political media content by taking a closer look at specific antecedents and consequences that can be traced back to theories of deliberative democracy. Thus, it aimed to strengthen the theoretical basis of an expectation that – although most often rather implicitly – seems to be inher-

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ent in research on political entertainment media and its use, which is, that it should also serve democratic purposes.

7.1 Theoretical and practical implications of the findings

The findings of both studies support the notion that entertainment experiences may have favorable democratic outcomes on citizens. Specifically, whereas previous research has shown that entertainment experiences, and appreciation in particular, can foster reflective thinking, interest in political issues, and the feeling of having learned something from the media (Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Mattheiß et al., 2013; Roth et al., 2014; Schneider, Bartsch, & Gleich, 2015; Weinmann, 2017), the present paper complements the list of positive outcomes by another one that originates from deliberative democratic theory: deliberation within (Goodin, 2000, 2003) or private deliberation (Mercier & Landemore, 2012). The studies found support that media users will be encouraged to perform this internal form of deliberation when they feel eudaimonically entertained by a specific media content. Furthermore, according to the findings this process is not impeded when individuals enjoy reading an article or watching a show at the same time.

Whereas the latter insight contradicts the prior theoretical assumptions, it is rather encouraging from a democratic point of view: The two studies present evidence that entertainment does not necessarily hamper deliberation as it seems to be suspected by some deliberation theorists (e.g., Dahlgren, 2005; Peters, 1997). On the contrary, the present findings suggest that entertainment through media use clearly contributes to what mediated deliberation scholars expect the media to achieve in a democratic society: to not only inform citizens about political issues, but to make them reflect about them and to learn about and critically assess different viewpoints and arguments (e.g., Gastil, 2008; Mutz, 2008; Page, 1996). In other words, if we wish citizens to be politically educated by the media in a deliberative way it will not be damaging but most favorable that the media offer them a certain amount of entertainment.

Turning to the media content, that is, to mediated deliberation, the findings of the studies could not find any evidence that its objective or manifest characteristics have an impact on the extent to which media users feel entertained in the one way or the other. No matter how many reasons and arguments were provided for claims and opinions (i.e., level of justification), to what extent there was a dialogic structure (i.e., level of responsiveness), or whether the tone of the discussion was respectful and polite or not (i.e., level of civility) – neither of these criteria seemed to make a difference with regard to the enjoyment and appreciation of media users. Given that overall, the experience of entertainment seems to contribute to one specific outcome that mediated deliberation may be expected to achieve (i.e., deliberation within), this is, normatively seen, a rather disappointing result. Of course, this does not mean that a high level of deliberativeness in media coverage does not have any positive effects at all. Still, there are numerous further possible consequences of mediated deliberation, for example, that citizens may take it as a model that teaches them how to 'correctly' deliberate in their daily lives (Wessler, 2008) or that they become more tolerant toward opposing political

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views (Mutz, 2008). But the manifest content criteria of deliberation focused on here – justification, responsiveness, and civility – appeared to be irrelevant with regard to entertainment experiences.

However, the picture is a different one when we consider how media users perceive these deliberative criteria to be fulfilled or not. Specifically, their perception of the levels of justification and responsiveness were positively associated with eudaimonic and, at least in part, also with hedonic entertainment experiences. Concerning eudaimonic entertainment experiences, this is in line with previous research which has argued that this form of entertainment may be associated with a high degree of cognitive challenges that media content poses on its users (Bartsch & Hartmann, 2017 Hartmann, 2013). More specifically, it may be concluded that, besides other content characteristics such as the number of depicted characters (Bartsch & Hartmann, 2017), the amount of reasons and arguments (i.e., justification) and the presence of a dialogic structure (i.e., responsiveness) seem to be further factors that determine the degree of cognitive challenges media users feel to be confronted with.

Other than expected, though, they also seem to enjoy recognizing some form of dialogue (i.e., responsiveness) in the coverage of a political issue. Perhaps the degree to which they felt different viewpoints to be related to each other made it easier for them to identify with the speakers holding these viewpoints – a process which has been argued to be an integral part of enjoyment (Vorderer et al., 2004). Rather surprisingly, the level of civility was not related to entertainment experiences even when considering media users' perception of it. This stands in contrast to previous research which suggests that individuals judge uncivil discussions to be more entertaining than civil ones because the former increase their arousal levels (Muddiman, 2011; Mutz, 2007; Mutz & Reeves, 2005). Although these studies did not differentiate between different forms of entertainment experiences, the present findings cannot support this suggestion for neither enjoyment nor appreciation. However, this does of course not speak against other effects of this criterion, of which some have already been suggested by previous research (e.g., lowering trust in political actors; Borah, 2013; Mutz, 2007; Mutz & Reeves, 2005).

Beyond the specific implications of the findings discussed up to this point, the results of the studies provoke a more general question: How may one interpret and deal with the fact that the results differ between the *manifest* and the *perceived* deliberativeness of media content? Of course, the research reported in this paper only focused on specific outcomes. Therefore, it can hardly be generalized that individuals' perception of the deliberative criteria lead to different effects than their objective assessment. Nevertheless, the incongruences in the findings might at least be taken as a reason to reflect about the common approach in mediated deliberation research: When it comes to the evaluation of the deliberative quality of media content most studies exclusively rely on quantitative content analyses, assuming that a high level of the objectively found degree of deliberativeness must have favorable outcomes on citizens.

On the one hand, of course, this approach might be justified considering the normative background of this line of research: One could argue that what matters is that the normative standards are met, regardless of whether this is realized

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by "ordinary" citizens or not. Holding this perspective, one may argue that citizens might just not have the competence to adequately recognize and judge deliberative standards. In fact, this does not seem unlikely: Similar doubts have been raised with respect to the capability and motivation of citizens to *perform* deliberation themselves (e.g., Manin, 2005; Rosenberg, 2014). However, on the other hand, even more traditional deliberative theorists, who do not pay specific attention to mediated but rather focus on interpersonal deliberation, would certainly agree that one important purpose of deliberative democracy is to involve citizens in democratic processes. In fact, the main idea behind the concept of mediated deliberation is to make deliberative discussions accessible to a large number of citizens, enabling them to form reasoned and well-informed opinions (e.g., Gastil, 2008; Page, 1996). Hence, it might be too shortsighted to simply mistrust the competencies of citizens and to further neglect their perceptions of deliberation in the media.

Perhaps it is necessary and useful to complement objective evaluation strategies in the form of content analyses by the subjective judgments of citizens (i.e., to which extent they perceive deliberative standards to be fulfilled). But, to what extent can we expect them to make reliable judgments? Do we need to specifically educate them in this respect, and how might this be put into practice? Or, do we probably need to further and more generally discuss about the validity of the standards for evaluating the deliberative performance of the media? Obviously, there are no simple answers to these and related questions. They certainly require a more comprehensive and normative discussion on the role that citizens should and are able to play in a modern democratic society. In addition, they require further empirical comparisons between the effects of the manifest and of the perceived deliberativeness of media content, in order to explore whether there are similar differences with respect to other outcomes as focused on here.

7.2 Limitations of the studies and desiderata for future research

One limitation of the studies lies in the media material that was used. Results are based on only two specific political issues (i.e., unconditional basic income and the abolition of cash money) as well as only two types of media material (i.e., one newspaper article and one clip of a political satire program). Of course, this limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research needs to find out whether the found relationships are similar when it comes to different media types and formats. For example, it may be assumed that in political blogs or political discussions on social network sites users will be confronted with a much higher amount of incivility than in journalistic media content as it has been used in this research. Considering this, it may be the case that the degree of incivility contained in the newspaper articles and the political satire clip was still too low to have a distinct impact on the entertainment experiences of the participants. The limited generalizability of the findings also results from the samples: Although non-student and relatively large samples were recruited for the two studies, both were rather highly educated and German-speaking. Both characteristics may have caused specific biases in the results. For example, citizens with a higher educational level might

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be more inclined to internally deliberate on political issues than others with lower educational backgrounds. Furthermore, the analyses for Study 2 were not based on an independent sample but on a sub-sample of Study 1. Hence, different samples with broader sociodemographic backgrounds would be necessary to validate the findings of this research.

Another limitation concerns the assumed causalities in the findings. First of all, this affects the relationship between entertainment experiences and deliberation within. As explained above, based on the insights of previous studies the theorized causal order seems plausible (e.g., Bartsch & Schneider, 2014; Roth et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2016). Nevertheless, as both constructs were measured nearly at the same time, this research cannot rule out the possibility that the process works the other way round, that is, the extent to which individuals internally deliberate about an issue may affect the degree to which they feel hedonically and eudaimonically entertained. Additionally, whereas in Study 1 an experimental design was chosen in order to draw causal inferences from the deliberativeness of media content on media users' entertainment experiences, the non-findings resulted in alternative analyses that took the perceived level of deliberativeness as judged by the users into account. Obviously, these analyses also relied on theoretical assumptions concerning the causal directions. To support these assumptions, further studies would have to manipulate media content with regard to individuals' judgments about its level of deliberativeness. Another consequence of the modifications made due to the mentioned non-findings is that both studies entirely relied on self-report measures. Especially for deliberation within this might have produced certain biases in the results. For example, the participants might have overestimated the degree to which they considered different viewpoints and arguments on the two political issues (Weinmann, 2018).

With the three criteria of justification, responsiveness, and civility as normative antecedents as well as with deliberation within as one consequence of media users' entertainment experiences the scope of this research and thus the conclusions which can be drawn from it are of course limited. There are several further deliberative content criteria, for example inclusiveness of actors and ideas (e.g., Rinke, 2016), that may also play an important role in the processes focused on here. Similarly, there are numerous other deliberative processes that could be considered as direct or indirect consequences of entertainment experiences. For example, future studies might empirically assess the theoretical suggestion that deliberation within may serve as a preparation or even encouragement for citizens to engage in interpersonal deliberation (Goodin, 2000; Mercier & Landemore, 2012). Last, the normative antecedents and consequences of media users' entertainment experiences accounted for in this paper are of course due to the specific normative tradition of deliberative democracy. Other normative democratic theories such as the republican or liberal model (see e.g., Ferree et al., 2002) set different normative standards. Therefore, taking another democratic theory as normative background would most likely lead to different conclusions with respect to the normative value of entertainment experiences (see e.g., Holbert, 2013, who discusses the normative value of political satire in the light of three democratic theories).

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7.3 Conclusion

The research reported in this paper took up on the demand to introduce normative democratic standards into political entertainment research (e.g., Holbert, 2013; Williams & Delli Carpini, 2011). The two studies showed that political media entertainment, defined as the experiences of individuals while consuming political media content, contribute to an outcome which does not only appear to be a democratically "positive" one. Even more, the outcome focused on here – internal deliberative thinking processes or, in short, deliberation within – qualifies as favorable and valuable through its foundation in a normative democratic theory, that is, in deliberative democracy. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that overall, entertainment experiences will benefit from certain deliberative standards that are proclaimed to be central when it comes to the question of how political issues should be discussed in the media (e.g., Bennett et al., 2004; Ferree et al., 2002; Rinke, 2016; Wessler, 2008). Specifically, entertainment experiences seem to be fostered if the criteria of justification and responsiveness are being fulfilled in media content, or at least if media users perceive them to be. Taken together, these insights provide us with a clearer picture of the role that these specific normative democratic standards may play for political entertainment processes.

On a different view, the findings also underline the normative as well as practical significance of mediated deliberation: Especially through provoking eudaimonic entertainment experiences some of the proclaimed standards can in fact contribute to citizen deliberation. Nevertheless, at least for the specific effects focused on in this paper, rather than objective criteria evaluating the deliberativeness of media content the subjective judgments of citizens revealed to be essential. As a conclusion, the present research suggests that it may be necessary to discuss how exactly mediated deliberation needs to be assessed, at least in order to further strengthen its entertainment and thereby societal value.

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Appendix A: Overview of the experimental groups

Table A1. Overview of the experimental groups and their size

				Level of justification		
				low	medium	high
Level of responsiveness	low	Level of incivility	low	32	42	33
			medium	38	34	34
			high	41	38	38
	medium	Level of incivility	low	37	38	35
			medium	39	44	35
			high	28	39	32
	high	Level of incivility	low	32	35	38
			medium	37	35	38
			high	39	32	35

Note. $N = 978$.

Appendix B: Item wordings

Table B1. Item wording of the entertainment experiences measurement

	Item wording (German)	Item wording (English)
Hedonic entertainment experiences	1. Es hat mir Spaß gemacht, den Artikel zu lesen. 2. Ich hatte beim Lesen des Artikels eine gute Zeit. 3. Der Artikel war unterhaltsam.	1. It was fun for me to read this article. 2. I had a good time reading this article. 3. The article was entertaining.
Eudaimonic entertainment experiences	1. Dieser Artikel hat mich bewegt. 2. Der Artikel hatte für mich eine tiefere Bedeutung. 3. Der Artikel hat mich zum Nachdenken angeregt.	1. I found this article to be very meaningful. 2. I was moved by this article. 3. The article was thought provoking.

Note. The German version of the items was retrieved from Schneider, Bartsch, and Oliver (2017). The original English ones are from Oliver and Bartsch (2010).

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Table B2. Item wording of the deliberation within measurement

German	English
1. Ich habe kritisch meine Tendenz hinterfragt, bestimmte Lösungen zu bevorzugen oder abzulehnen.	1. I have reassessed my biases favoring or opposing different solutions.
2. Nachdem ich die Stellungnahmen von anderen [(z. B. Experten und Parteianhängern)] gehört habe, habe ich versucht, selbst eine Einschätzung zum Thema zu treffen.	2. After listening to the advice of others [(e.g., experts and partisans)] I have taken responsibility for making up my own mind about the topic.
3. Ich habe über verschiedene Meinungen zum Thema nachgedacht.	3. I have reflected on several opinions about the topic.
4. Ich habe über Argumente nachgedacht, die für oder gegen verschiedene Meinungen zum Thema (einschließlich meiner eigenen) sprechen.	4. I have thought about arguments for and against my own as well as others' opinions about the topic.
5. Ich habe die Argumente, die für oder gegen verschiedene Meinungen (einschließlich meiner eigenen) sprechen, kritisch beurteilt.	5. I have evaluated the arguments that speak for and against my own as well as for and against others' opinions.

Table B3. Item wordings of the measurements for the level of justification, responsiveness, and (in-)civility as perceived by the participants

Criterion	Item wording (German)	Item wording (English)
Justification	1. Im Artikel genannte Ansichten und Meinungen wurden durch Argumente begründet. 2. Im Artikel genannte Behauptungen und Forderungen wurden durch Argumente begründet.	1. Viewpoints and opinions mentioned in the article were justified with arguments. 2. Propositions and claims that were mentioned in the article were justified with arguments.
Responsiveness	1. Der Artikel wies eine dialogische Struktur auf (d. h. er war wie eine Art Gespräch aufgebaut). 2. In dem Artikel wurden unterschiedliche Ansichten und Meinungen aufeinander bezogen. 3. In dem Artikel wurden unterschiedliche Behauptungen und Forderungen aufeinander bezogen.	1. The article had a dialogic structure (i.e., it was structured in the manner of a conversation). 2. Differing viewpoints and opinions were contrasted in the article. 3. Differing propositions and claims were contrasted in the article.
(In-)Civility	1. Der Artikel enthielt Schimpfwörter. 2. Der Artikel enthielt persönliche Angriffe auf bzw. Beleidigungen von Personen, Organisationen oder Gruppen. 3. Der Artikel enthielt anderweitig unsachlichen Sprachgebrauch (z. B. Sarkasmus oder Ironie).	1. The article contained swear words. 2. The article contained insults directed toward individuals, organizations, or groups. 3. The article contained other forms of impertinent use of language (e.g., sarcasm or irony).

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