

English Abstracts

Hartmut Wessler / Patrik Haffner / Eike Mark Rinke: On the Issue of Self-Determination in a Digital World. Developing a Normative Conception of Individual and Collective Self-Determination to Guiding Empirical Research on Digital Communication (Selbstbestimmung in der digitalen Welt. Über die Vorteile eines ebenenübergreifenden normativen Basiskonzepts für die empirische Erforschung der digitalen Kommunikation), pp. 395-406

As an introduction to this special issue of *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft*, we present a conceptualisation of self-determination in a digital world which connects the individual with the collective realm. We draw on Ryan and Deci's (2017) motivational theory of psychological self-determination, where the authors distinguished between three empirical dimensions of self-determination, and we apply these dimensions to the collective level. With regard to the issue of autonomy, collective self-determination refers to the institutions and the rules of a democratic communication system. The matter of competence refers to citizens' beliefs in political efficacy, and with regard to the aspect of social connectedness, collective self-determination refers to the existence of shared communicative spaces, even across deep divides. Such a conception of self-determination allows us to identify causal influences between the individual and collective realms. It also helps singling out the challenges of self-determination in societal communication, as well as its potentials. In conclusion, we show how the individual papers within this special issue relate to these three empirical dimensions, and to the two levels of self-determination; highlighting their respective normative relevance.

Keywords : self-determination, autonomy, competence, social connectedness, normative theory, empirical research, digital communication

Adrian Meier: A Question of Digital Autonomy? The Role of Autonomy in Digital Communication for Psychological Needs and Mental Health in Daily Life (Alles eine Frage der digitalen Autonomie? Die Rolle von Autonomie in der digitalen Kommunikation für psychologische Grundbedürfnisse und psychische Gesundheit im Alltag), pp. 407-427

Digital autonomy, defined here as self-determined behaviour in private interpersonal digital communication, may have become a key factor for mental health in our permanently connected everyday lives. Drawing on self-determination theory, this study investigates how individual differences concerning the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy needs in digital interpersonal communication affect general need satisfaction and frustration as well as mental health in everyday life. Results of a diary study of N=532 student smartphone users show that those whose need for autonomy in digital communication is more satisfied experienced slightly higher general need satisfaction (i.e. relatedness, competence, and autonomy) and eudemonic well-being (i.e. authenticity). In contrast, users who reported to have suffered more frustration regarding their need for autonomy in digital communication also showed slightly more frustration of general relatedness, competence and autonomy needs, as well as increased perceived stress in their daily lives. Autonomy, thus, appears to be a fruitful concept, differentiating between positive and negative effects of digital communication.

Keywords : self-determination, autonomy, digital communication, mental health, need satisfaction, diary study

Kathrin Friederike Müller / Arne Freya Zillich: How to Communicate via Facebook . On the Issue of Self-Determined Media Use on Social Network Sites (Wie man auf Facebook kommunizieren sollte. Selbstbestimmtes Medienhandeln auf Social Network Sites), pp. 428-445

Researchers often claim the use of social network sites as lacking self-determination. However, we take a different approach by asking whether and how users can communicate in a self-determined way on *Facebook*. We argue that *Facebook* communities establish norms collectively by negotiating how to use *Facebook*. Furthermore, we claim that these norms change over time, as users become more experienced in using the site. Drawing on a differentiation between descriptive and injunctive norms, we conducted six focus groups with active *Facebook* users of different age groups, professional and educational backgrounds. The results show that users are not aware of a consistent set of descriptive norms. Yet, we identified seven major injunctive norms. These define how members of the *Facebook* community should ideally act as users, how they should communicate properly, and which practices of networking they should use. Furthermore, the results show that norms of *Facebook* use have changed, as well as the use of *Facebook* itself has changed, while both are related to one another. Self-determination is, therefore, realised via mutual norm development.

Keywords : norms, Facebook, focus groups, self-determination, media use

Philipp K. Masur: It Is More Than Just Privacy Risk Awareness. A Reconceptualization of Online Privacy Literacy as a Composition of Knowledge, Abilities, and Skills (Mehr als Bewusstsein für Privatheitsrisiken. Eine Rekonzeptualisierung der Online-Privatheitskompetenz als Kombination aus Wissen, Fähig- und Fertigkeiten), pp. 446-465

Online privacy literacy is often regarded as a requirement for informational self-determination. As a result, fostering online privacy literacy is often discussed as a potential solution to data protection issues on the Internet. So far, online privacy has been operationalised as a knowledge concept. Research has shown that privacy knowledge is related to more self-data-protection. However, it is not clear whether a respective promotion actually contributes to a more self-determined behaviour on the Internet, and we also do not know whether it makes people behave more deliberate and more in accordance with their privacy needs. This paper argues that online privacy literacy has to be conceptualised as a combination of knowledge and specific abilities and skills. We propose a reconceptualisation that includes privacy-related reflection and critical abilities, as well as practical privacy and data protection skills. We also include factorial knowledge about economic, technical, and legal aspects of online privacy.

Keywords: online privacy, privacy literacy, knowledge acquisition, data protection, informational self-determination

Wolfgang Reißmann / Dagmar Hoffmann: On Self-Determination within Fan Fiction Cultures: Transformative Media Practice and Copyright as Antagonists? (Selbstbestimmung in Fan Fiction-Kulturen. Transformative Medienpraxis und Urheberrecht als Antagonisten?), pp. 466-484

Transformative works based on established media products (images, books, TV series, movies, etc.) are present in huge amounts on the Internet. However, their circulation via various platforms and other networked publics brings copyright-related tensions and conflicts to the fore. The example of fan fiction can clarify how collective self-determination and lived media practice relate to copyright and judicial assessment categories. A qualitative analysis of interviews with fan fiction authors in combination with a study of the four biggest German and English-speaking platforms for fan fiction shows that specific community arrangements have formed beyond existing legal frameworks. Such arrangements are of obligatory relevance for the authors, and serve the self-assurance and tenability of their creative works. In comparison, the law and the fan practices correlate much more with one another than usually assumed.

Keywords : copyright, transformative works, fan fiction, self-determination

Larissa Krainer: A Collective Autonomy as a Form of Self-Determination in Communication and Media Ethics (Kollektive Autonomie als kommunikations- und medienethische Selbstbestimmung), pp. 485-501

This is a theory-based contribution. I will start by tracing the concept of collective autonomy, which comes from the neighbouring discipline of philosophy, and will explore the associated normative requirements involved. In a second step, I reflect on considerations about the organisation of processes for collective ethical decision-making. Thirdly, I present an outline of the procedural conceptions I have taken up and examine their development within the sphere of Communication and Media Ethics (i.e. discourse ethics, the model of tiered responsibility, the stakeholder approach, and process ethics). The fourth part of the paper comprises a critical discussion of these approaches. I point out the boundaries that are set for the organisation of collective autonomy in terms of pragmatism and I establish that participation is indispensable but not sufficient for collective autonomy. I then ask whether and to what extent networking through digital media offers the potential for broad participation, and whether and to what extent digital media could serve as a useful tool for the production of collective autonomy. In conclusion, I call for a more powerful combination of different ethical concepts within the framework of Communication and Media Ethics.

Keywords : media and communication ethics, discourse ethics, process ethics, collective autonomy

Stefan Geiß / Melanie Magin / Birgit Stark / Pascal Jürgens: Common Meeting Ground in Peril: On the Selection Logics of Political Information Sources and Their Influence on the Fragmentation of Individual Issue Horizons („Common Meeting Ground“ in Gefahr? Selektionslogiken politischer Informationsquellen und ihr Einfluss auf die Fragmentierung individueller Themenhorizonte), pp. 502-525

The diversification of the political information supply has raised concerns about social integration and collective democratic self-determination. Automatically personalised media content on social network sites such as Facebook which make use of individual online behaviour are often suspected of facilitating fragmentation. People with extreme political attitudes are particularly seen as vulnerable and likely to losing touch with society as a whole, for instance, if they are caught in an ‘echo chamber’. We draw on data from an innovative operationalisation of issue fragmentation using individual-level data, investigating whether the use of such content reduces the compatibility of individual issue horizons; i.e. reduced issue diversity, top issue focus, and issue overlap with others. We also investigate how this contributes to the fragmentation of society, both generally and among political extremists. Empirically, we rely on data from a two-week daily diary study with 333 participants, who provided information on the two political issues they found most important on that day. Participants also specified which sources they relied on for political information about the relevant issue. Our results show that social media as a source of political information do not reduce the compatibility of individual issue horizons. However, relying on these media outlets increases the compatibility of issue horizons, particularly among those with extreme political attitudes. In conclusion, we discuss the implications of these findings for the self-determination of individuals and society in the digital world.

Keywords: agenda setting, public sphere, common meeting ground, daily diary, fragmentation, information intermediaries, issue horizon, news consumption, personalization, political information sources, search engines, social media

Fabian Zimmermann / Matthias Kohring: ‘Fake News’ as a Topical Disinformation: A Systematic Explication of a Heterogeneous Concept („Fake News“ als aktuelle Desinformation. Systematische Bestimmung eines heterogenen Begriffs), pp. 526-541

Not least since the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, the issue of the so-called ‘fake news’ raised a lively debate among researchers. Among other ideas, the potential danger for collective self-determination of democracies has been the centre of attention. Unfortunately, theoretical considerations lag behind empirical research on the object of investigation, and definitions of ‘fake news’ are neither homogeneous nor consistent. Moreover, they are often set without any reasonable development. We attempt to overcome this deficit in theory building by drawing on existing research about disinformation, lying, and (public) communication. We replace the term ‘fake news’ by the concept of ‘topical disinformation’, systematically discussing its necessary conditions. Topical disinformation is defined in this paper as the communication of untruthful and empirically false information regarding novel and relevant issues that are claimed to be true.

Keywords: fake news, definition, topical disinformation, lying, communication, topicality, truth claim, untruth, untruthfulness

Hanan Badr / Carola Richter: Collective Self-Determination in Autocracies: Agenda-Building in the Context of the (Digital) Media and the Anti-Torture Activism in Egypt (Kollektive Selbstbestimmung in Autokratien? Agenda-Building im Zusammenspiel von (digitalen) Medien und Aktivisten bei Anti-Folter-Protesten in Ägypten), pp. 542-561

This paper focuses on the conditions and mechanisms shaping collective self-determination of politically marginalised actors in authoritarian contexts. Drawing on the agenda-building approach, we analyse how such actors can succeed in pushing taboos into the realm of the broader public; thus creating counter-issues contesting the authoritarian regime's framing. Ultimately, the legitimacy of the regime is called into question. To illustrate this, we analyse the last months of Mubarak's reign in Egypt in 2010–2011. We empirically examine the case of Khaled Said's death, which activists framed as a symbol of arbitrary police violence. We trace the transfer of the activists' agenda into the agenda of the mass media. Using a combined quantitative and qualitative content analysis of two print media and one Facebook page (N=316), we determine the thematic cycle of the case. This is complemented by interviews with journalists and activists in order to shed light on the mechanisms underlying successful agenda-building.

Keywords: activism, agenda-building, Khaled Said, Egypt, Arab Spring, social media, public sphere, torture, authoritarian state, issue cycle

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