

English Abstracts

Johanna Schindler / Claudia Fortkord / Lone Posthumus / Magdalena Obermaier / Nayla Fawzi / Carsten Reinemann: Where Does Media Hostility Come From and Where Does It Go? On the Relationship between Populist Attitudes, Hostility towards the Media, Negative Emotions and Participation (Woher kommt und wozu führt Medienfeindlichkeit? Zum Zusammenhang von populistischen Einstellungen, Medienfeindlichkeit, negativen Emotionen und Partizipation), pp. 283-301.

Sensing an increase in hate speech and physical aggression against journalists, we see a new level of hostility towards the media, and with it potentially far-reaching consequences for society in general. However, little is known so far about both the individual causes of media hostility and its influence on individual media-related emotions and behaviour. We set out to determine the influence of populist attitudes, i.e. the significance of the idea of a homogenous, 'good' people v an 'evil' elite on media hostility. Our study, moreover, examines the broader consequence of hostile attitudes towards the media. Drawing on data from an online survey with 1,102 participants, we show how the idea of the media as immoral, government-controlled and manipulative is essentially rooted in populist attitudes rather than in left-wing or right-wing attitudes. The effects of populist attitudes on the level of media hostility can be seen to be mediated partially by the level of the perceived representation of participants' own interests in the media, and by the use of alternative media. People showing hostile attitudes towards the media are not only angry, but they are also more politically active and do more often express their opinion in the media.

Key words: media hostility, media criticism, media trust, populism, populist attitudes, subjective media theories, political participation, alternative media

Marcus Maurer / Pablo Jost / Milan Pfoh / Maximiliane Porath / Lea Wilke: Motivated Doubts. How Recipients' Attitudes towards the Topic of News Coverage Influence Their Perceptions of News Medias' Trustworthiness (Motivierte Zweifel. Wie die Voreinstellungen der Rezipienten zum Berichterstattungsgegenstand ihre Wahrnehmung der Medienglaubwürdigkeit beeinflussen), p. 302-319

Right-wing populist groups' accusations of a 'lying' press and the increasing fear of the effects of fake news on public opinion formation give rise to the question of how trust in the news media can be explained. Social psychological theories such as the Hostile Media Effect or the idea of Motivated Reasoning suggest that recipients perceive media coverage as trustworthy, if it is in line with their own predispositions, regardless of notions of accuracy and balance. In an online experiment, we tested the influence of pre-existing attitudes on media trust by using the issue of climate change as a case study. Participants were exposed to news articles that either dramatized or downplayed the consequences of climate change. As we expected, participants indeed perceive news articles as more trustworthy if the facts displayed are in line with their own attitudes towards climate change. This is particularly true in the case of recipients with extreme attitudes.

Keywords: trust in news media, fake news, hostile media effect, motivated reasoning, climate change

Maria Löblich / Niklas Venema: Social Democracy and Media Policy. The Contribution of Politically Independent Authors to the Press Reform Debate at the Beginning of the 20th Century (Sozialdemokratie und Medienpolitik. Der Beitrag parteiungebundener Autoren in der Pressereformdebatte Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts), pp. 320-336

At the beginning of the 20th century, the debate about the reform of the press was a reaction to the commercialisation of the media, and was essentially concerned with the socialisation of newspaper advertisements. At the time, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) was not able to achieve much representation of their issues in the mass-circulated press. However, the SPD did not participate in the debate tackling the Party's communication problems. Drawing on the approach of 'discursive institutionalism' (Schmidt 2008), we examine the reasons for the SPD's absence in this debate. We are in line with the idea that the central authors of the debate, Karl Bücher, Erich Schairer, and Wolfgang Schumann, also dealt with the SPD's mass communication problems. Using a qualitative content and document analysis, we analysed publications, party conference minutes, and other sources from the period of time between 1908 and 1920. The findings reveal that although the party had to admit they could not compete with the mass-circulated newspapers, the SPD believed to be able to solve its problems through its own party press. This can be explained by the party's historical experiences as well as structural issues. However, due to their institutional context, the three authors that sympathized with social democracy but remained politically independent were able to advocate state interventions on economic structures of the press and thus, treated the party's communication problems.

Keywords: media policy, communication history, mass-circulated press, qualitative analysis, discursive institutionalism