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„Do politicians influence media`s reputation in social networks? #FAKE NEWS"

verfasst von / submitted by

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Table of Content

Figures Index

Table Index

1. Introduction

Donald Trump won the presidential election 2016. As the Republican candidate, he attracted attention in public with his controversial statements around his "America First" campaign. Almost 50% of Americans voted for this policy, yet several leaders of different nations, organizations and institutions expressed their concern about the impact of Trump's rhetoric and style of leadership on America`s society and its international relations.

On 11th of January 2017, Donald Trump held his first press conference as the designated president of the USA. A memorable event especially for traditional news media organizations in general and for CNN in particular. The behavior of Trump towards a CNN reporter was a big story in American and European news coverage and the term "fake news" received a new meaning. I watched those reports attentively and was shocked. Donald Trump used the term "fake news" repeatedly, he differentiated between good and bad media outlets and refused a CNN reporter's questions: "*Go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead. No, not you. Not you. Your organization is terrible. Your organization is terrible. Let's go. Go ahead. Quiet. Quiet. She's asking a question. Don't be rude. Don't be rude. Don't be rude. No, I'm not going to give you a question. I'm not going to give you a question. You are fake news. Go ahead. Go ahead*" (The New York Times 2017a).

I asked myself, what does it mean, when Trump starts to discredit established media organizations like CNN in public? What does it mean for the media's credibility and in the long run for democracy, if powerful politicians start a campaign against the media's trustworthiness? How will citizens react to Trump's assault on the media's reputation? Will this negative talk fall on fruitful ground among citizens in times of "real" fake news?

I grew up in a family, where the TV was the so-called modern version of a fireplace. We would sit together watching the news, nearly every day at the same time. This ritual shaped our conversations within family, school, and friends. It determined the topics we talked about and the opinions we formed. The range of news, we discussed was clearly defined by the media, especially by the public broadcasting service – called ORF in Austria. Social media did not exist in the early 2000s and online news websites were just starting to

develop. The media's ecosystem was manageable as there were only a few "big media players" in the print ("Kronen Zeitung") and broadcasting sector ("ORF") although liberalization and the rise of the internet had already led to new market admissions and shrinking coverage from traditional news media.

At university, I learned about the good and the bad of a media system`s liberalization. The good was a decreasing influence of politics and several powerful media entrepreneurs by the rise of organizational media diversity. The bad was the increasing economic pressure on an organizational level, a change in journalistic standards (keywords: "advertorial", "infotainment", etc.) and the formation of global media conglomerates, such as Murdoch's News Cooperation, threatening the media`s diversity.

Nevertheless, besides the different tensions among media, politics, society and economy, the greatest and most important good for media was and is its independence. Especially Europeans are sensitized to this issue, due to their dark past, when the Nazi regime utilized the media as a powerful instrument to manipulate public opinion.

Independence as a normative value enables media organizations to criticize politicians and to challenge political and economic leaders by providing information. News media, and especially mass media leads to public dialogue concerning variety of political concepts. Therefore, it is crucial that, citizens believe in the media's independence and they trust the offered information in order to participate in a political discourse. My criteria to evaluate a news media's trustworthiness probably does not differ from other people. It's a sum of already made experiences, reputation in general, journalistic style and of course the perceived (political) bias or level of objectivity in news media coverage.

The rise of populism in Western democracies, and the ongoing change in the media ecosystem through social media and the internet are questioning the media's independence and therefore function in society. The loss of trust in the media and established politics by citizens and simultaneously the surge of misinformation ("fake news") lead to a general uncertainty of the media's function as the Fourth Estate.

In my opinion, the relationship between politics and the media is changing from the media as a critic to the media as a political opponent. With the rise of social

media politicians no longer need to rely on these publics, and established media organizations to amplify their message.

The balance of power between media and politics is changing and the consequence of this change is not yet foreseeable. Trump demonstrates this change as he discredits all media organizations as being "fake news" which do not support his views. I believe that politicians have a strong influence on what phrases, terms and concepts are being used to describe different issues in public. These terms and contextual framings are reproduced by the media, which shapes public opinion as well as direct communication between individuals. Therefore, my assumption is that the manner in which politicians talk about the media indirectly influence the public trust in it.

The unforgettable event of Trumps first press conference as a president led me to investigate the impact of Trump's negative talk against the news media. Since Twitter has gained popularity as a news source for people in general, but also as a tool for politicians to directly place their messages, I determined to use Twitter data to examine the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis:

1. *If Donald Trump uses the term "fake news" in his tweets the number of Twitter users applying this term in direct conversation (f.ex: @CNN) with news media organizations increases on Twitter.*

In addition, one of my aims is to explore recent research papers and discussions concerning "Digital Methods" and "Datafication" within the field of communication science. The popular term "Big Data" promises new possibilities of how and how much data, scientists can use by introducing new tools for collecting and analyzing specific communication data. The digitalization of social life is summarized under the term "Datafication". "*Datafication means the representation of social life in computerized data*" and "*additional we accept production and analysis of this digital traces of our media usage as baseline of reality construction*" (Hepp 2016, p. 229). Results of these analyses for example are algorithms for product recommendations, market models for financial trading, navigations systems based on crowd intelligence – to only name a few. Hepp (2016, p. 241) desires variegated discussions and research in data-

driven times. This motivates me to deal with actual digital phenomena like fake news, clickbait and echo chambers and to use digital methods for collecting and analyzing the "digital traces".

On one hand, there are promising innovative ways of generating knowledge through access to huge amounts of raw data, on the other hand, data, especially from social media platforms has its limits. First, social media platforms shape communication as they introduce and enhance algorithms that influence user behavior in engagement and response to advertisements: "*Social media platforms are not just where communication happens—they shape what we might know of communication*" (Schrock 2017, p. 703). In addition, click farms and social bots are imitating and manipulating human communication behavior, questioning the object of investigation if we want to examine human communication behavior. Second, data gathered from such platforms such as Twitter are "*unstable even across different collection methods*". (Schrock 2017, p. 703 ref. to Dicroll & Walker 2014). And third, those companies already limit and restrict access to data, as part of their business model to sell this data, besides advertising. Consequently, I encountered problems during data collection (see chapter 3.3).

I'm not a software engineer nor am I familiar with programming languages, but many free tutorials, scripts, introductions and examples for different data analysis are easily accessible as the community around data analytics shares a plethora of their experience and knowledge. By using the following data analysis tools: Python, Javascript, and advice from Github, I was able to collect and analyze a huge amount of data with different tools and methods. Python and Javascript are programming/script languages whereas Github is an online platform for source code management and collaboration. I would therefore like to encourage other students of communication science to experiment with these new tools and possibilities to contribute to the scientific controversy of "Big Data" as a source for examination from a communication-science perspective.

Finally, I pursue the following aims with my master thesis:

4

1. To examine recent literature concerning the tense relationship between politicians and the established media effectuated by the rise of populism and changes of the media ecosystem

2. To determine impact of framing by politicians on the media's image and reputation

3. To use new methods and tools for collecting and analyzing digital communication, to ascertain boon and bane of "Big (communication) Data".

1.1 Relevance for Communication Science

Examining the influence of politics on media is a common issue in communications science, especially in a historical, comparative and systems-theoretical approach. However, understanding the influence of politicians on the perception of media by the public is a relatively new topic. Populist politicians, especially from right wing parties are gaining power in Western democracies. At the same time their distinctive style in political rhetoric reaches the mainstream. Terms like "fake news" in America or "Lügenpresse" in Germany and Austria are already socially acceptable and accusations against established media organizations of writing the untruth is meanwhile a popular narrative. In addition, many people get their political news from social media platforms. In social media the borders between subjectivity and objectivity are blurring, algorithms are managing what news we see and industry codes of practices such as a journalistic duty to accuracy or transparency do not play a role in terms of publishing. Due to these developments, communication scientists need to re-raise the question of the media's function in society. Researchers need to make the media's function for society the subject of a broader discussion. Regarding the changing political landscape in Western democracies where "media bashing" in several ways has become mainstream, the fulfillment of this function is threatened. There are different developments along media`s function for society that stress the importance and relevance of dealing with the implications of Trump's negative statements against established news media.

One popular and important function of the media in a democratic society is transmitting information, especially for news media companies or former public media. Within a liberal economic environment, the media needs to act as a private enterprise. Consequently image, reputation, credibility and above all trust are key performance indicators for buying a media product, for reading a newspaper and listening to journalists and absorb information. Matthes and Kohring (2003, p. 5) perceive trust in journalism as a key variable for media effects on recipients - without trust, news media cannot fulfill its social orientation function by, for example providing information.

Herger (2006, p. 25) in general sees trust in organizations of Western society vulnerable and mentions that mass media and online media lead to a fiction-alization of our society. This is a big challenge on both the symbolic- and com-munication level: self-expression, image, and reputation, as well as trust pro-vide central functions to stabilize fictional perception. Additionally, Pierre Ro-sanvallon (2008, p. 4 cited in Coleman 2012, p. 36) calls trust "*an institutional economizer*" that "*eliminates the need for various procedures of verification and proof*" regarding the "*info-smog of the contemporary media ecology*" (Coleman 2012, p. 36). But trust in media and political institutions is decreasing for decades as recent surveys show (see chapter 2.2). Scholars do not get tired of examining the reasons for this loss in trust and it`s causes. Müller (2013) understands distrust in news media as a consequence of the democra-tization processes in regard to the comparative analysis of trust in news media between democratic and authoritarian countries. Jones (2004) concludes that there is a correlation between trust in political institutions and news media, where low levels of trust are a result of general political malaise. Tsfati and Capella (2003) examine the correlation between distrust and the use of non-mainstream news sources. One result showed that people who mistrust main-stream media consumed less information from these sources, and turned to non-mainstream news sources such as the Internet (Tsfati and Capella 2003). On the individual level, Voigt (2016) found that image and reputation of a news media company acted as a heuristic to whether or not people trust the source, which directly relates to Rosanvallon's statement above.

A further influence on the media's image is the result of personalization tenden-cies. Lee (2015) concludes that online interaction on social media by reporters, anchormen, etc. leads to a perceived bias of news by their audience.

Perceived quality like the accuracy of a published news article is a crucial ele-ment of the media's credibility (The Media Insight Project 2016). This quality suffers from the need for a fast production of news to get consumers' attention in terms of clicks and views. The speed of news production is one conse-quence of the digitalization of information and the economic pressure on news media institutions/companies (Bakir & McStay 2017, Cook 2017). This charac-teristic of the digital media ecology comes at once with a change in political culture. The rise of populist anti-establishment parties (Kemmers et al. 2015)

and their political rhetoric is heating up the discussion around feeling manipulated by the "establishment". Populist parties are fueling distrust in well-established information sources and government.

A core dimensions of populism is "anti-elitism", where populists want to restore the peoples' sovereignty and accuse elites of a conspiracy against a disenfranchised majority (Wirth et al. 2016). "We and the others" is expressed by the people against the establishment. The non-partisanship of established media organizations is questioned by politicians, majoritarian from right-wing parties. Politicians create a narrative around the conspiracy of established news media manipulating peoples' minds by biased and politically manipulated information. Aupers (2012, p. 24) argues as well that in contemporary culture, trust in institutions, politicians, the state and the media is perceived as being naïve. Narratives built on conspiracy have already found their place in popular culture, inspired by real political scandals, "paranoia thrillers", blockbusters and bestsellers. Examples like the Da Vinci Code, The Matrix, tv-series such as 24 and the X-Files assume that we live in an illusion of social reality (Aupers 2012, p. 24). This form of conspiracy culture is already well established and so conspiracies by populists fall on good soil in America. A study of The Chapman University (American Fears Wave 3, 2016) underlines that the United States is a conspiratorial society: Only about a fourth of Americans (26%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with all nine conspiracy theories.

Figure 1: Belief in one of nine presented conspiracies. The Chapman University Survey of American Fears 2016.

An effective communication strategy used by populists is to create short and pointed statements that break with the supposed "political correctness" of the majority by referring to the concept of liberty (Krämer 2017). A good example for this is the evolution of the German word "Lügenpresse" in America, where people from alt-right parties and Trump supporters used this old Nazi term, against journalists during a Trump rally in Cleveland, Ohio in October 2016 (Grey & Nesbit 2016). These types of "scandals" attract people's attention and therefore have an enormous potential for high clicks. The media itself is reproducing and disseminating the populist narratives as clicks and advertising revenues increase with growing attention.

Unrestricted access, direct communication to people without critical gate keeping of journalists and the need for short and pointed statements made especially Twitter a powerful medium for populists and in this particular case for Donald Trump. White House press secretary Sean Spicer underlined this direct and raw communication channel when he stated that the use of Twitter "*gives him (D.T.) an opportunity to speak straight to the American people*"

(Bump 2017) – what perfectly reflects the people-centric communication strategy of populists (Ernst et.al 2017). Further, Oliver and Rahn (2016) conducted a study, where they did a content analysis of campaign speeches of the 2016 election candidates. Their analysis shows that Trump applies a rhetoric "*that is distinctive in its simplicity, anti-elitism and collectivism*" (Oliver & Rahn 2016, p. 189) what are core principles of populism.

An alarming development for journalists concerning populist politicians and their communication strategy is the "*production of confusion*" and the control over the media`s "*deep grammar*" (Rosen 2017). Jay Rosen a professor of journalism at the New York University stated during a discussion at MSNBC that "*The production of confusion is a method that the Trump White House is using as control, and the fact that when we're done listening to Kellyanne Conway, we know less as viewers doesn't seem to bother the journalists who interview her, and they're sort of slow in accommodating this fact*" (Rosen 2017). Rosen (2017) pointed out that the "*deep grammar*" of the media – "*the underlying and implicit business model of how the news outlets function*" (Rosen 2017) is access to information, press conferences and White House briefings as well as the willingness of politicians to answer and get interviewed. Rosen (2017) stated that this control over the media`s business model leads to lower standards in challenging fake news and the so-called alternative facts (Rosen 2017).

With around 40 million followers on Twitter Donald Trump reaches an enormous audience. Consequently, Trump does not really depend on the established news media`s attention whilst the other way around news media needs stories about Trump to keep their business model running: the more clicks, the wider the reach, the higher advertising revenue will be generated. And the further away a politician's statement is from political correctness the higher the clicks will be, the more attention will be gathered.

Another issue concerning the decrease of trust in media is the changing function that comes in line with new players on the information source landscape. The media system itself faces an ongoing transformation caused by the rise of digital and social media. Julian Wallace (2017) developed a new model of the gatekeeping theory due to the rise of individuals, algorithms and platforms in digital news dissemination. "*Phenomena such as the Arab Spring, the Occupy*

movement and WikiLeaks showed a changing role of traditional media to act as the exclusive gatekeeper in the selection and dissemination of information (Wallace 2017, p. 1)." News digital gatekeeping mechanisms such as Google's page rang "Hummingbird" and Facebook's "NewsFeed" algorithms are on the rise and are constructing social reality (Just & Latzer 2016, Wallace 2017). Just and Latzer (2016, p. 238) conclude that "*(…) compared to reality construction by traditional mass media, algorithmic reality construction tends to increase individualization, commercialization, inequalities, and deterritorialization and to decrease transparency, controllability, and predictability*".

The information dissemination on Twitter and other social media platforms follows the social network behind follower relations which means "*a shift from a one-directional news flow to a complex network of relations involving existing and new gatekeepers*" (Wallace 2017, p. 5). As the players in the information dissemination process are changing, an important question from a legal perspective around digital gate keeping and fake news arises: who will be responsible for the dissemination of "real" fake news?

Established news media is responsible for the content it produces, and independent institutions control their ethical standards in journalism. However new players like Facebook, Twitter and Google provide tools and services for information seeking, network building and consumer targeting – but they are not held responsible for the dissemination of content. So "real" fake news is going to survive in the digital media ecosystem as there remains a lack of legal and organizational regulation of these new global "media" players. A prominent case to demonstrate this lack of oversight and ethical responsibility was a refugee's selfie with Angela Merkel in Germany (Der Spiegel 2017). His picture was abused on Facebook in connection with a multitude of false allegations starting from being a known terrorist to having beaten a homeless person. The Syrian refugee Modamani sued Facebook to delete existing posts and to block new ones which include his selfie. The Würzburg district court ruled that Facebook as an organization cannot be sued for defamation in this case. The libel generated by Facebook users was not an act instigated by the organization and Facebook can therefore not being forced to an omission. Consequently, there seem to be few ways to defend yourself as a victim of public defamation

in the digital sphere. The missing legal framework will lead to a new discussion about the (social) responsibility of these new gate keepers.

In summary, the crisis of trust in media is an alarming development considering the rise of populism, new gate keepers without defined responsibility, the speed of information dissemination and the limited resource "attention".

This master thesis assumes that next to already described changes in information sources, transmission and dissemination, politicians and their rhetoric have an indirect influence on peoples trust in media. Negative talk by politicians against news media is a strategic instrument especially for populists, but it also shapes peoples' minds and perception of news media and journalists. I'm referring to Manuel Castells core argument in his book "Communication Power" (2013, p. 1) where he states: "(…) *power relationships, the foundation of the institutions that organize society, are largely constructed in people`s minds through communication processes. The shaping of minds is a more decisive and lasting form* (…)". Investigating effects of mind shaping against the media by politicians is certainly a critical issue for news media and communication science. Identifying reasons for a bad reputation, loss of credibility and deterioration of trust is going to be a central task for researchers, journalist and news media organizations.

The post-truth age or post-factual relativism postulates that emotions as trust or "perception of truth" are more important for evaluating politics or other institutions and their representatives than factual information. Sergio Sismondo (2017, p. 3) refers to an interview with Aaron Blake (The Washington Post) and Trump spokeswoman Kellyanne Conway where she said*: "Why is everything taken at face value? … You always want to go by what's come out of his mouth rather than look at what's in his heart" (e.g. Blake, 2017)."*

The use of the term "alternative facts" by Kellyanne Conway in conjunction-, the White House press secretary's statement concerning the attendance numbers of Donald Trump's inauguration, was one of the best examples to summarize the development towards framing by politicians in combination with a new relativism: uncomfortable facts are met by "alternative facts" and inconvenient reports of news media are called "fake news".

Framing is a very popular strategy in political communication, especially in America, for example, remember "The axis of Evil" frame by George W. Bush. The use of persuasive strategies, the right "spin" and other tactical instruments to convince voters, do have a long history. But using these techniques against the news media, is something that Donald Trump, especially as president, rediscovered. Donald Trump started using the term "fake news" and/or "fake media" against traditional news media in press conferences as president, during his electoral campaign and on Twitter. He additionally introduced a new connotation for the term fake news and tries to frame a whole well-established industry. Fake news is normally characterized as writing something wrong, not based on facts, fictional/made up stories frequently with the intend to grab attention. Trump goes further and reframes "fake news" as any news media outlet and/or journalists of certain media companies who do not share his opinion and views. He accuses those not agreeing with him of "fake news" even if reports are based on facts. Increasing relativism ("post-factual"), where *factual information is often downgraded to mere opinion*" (Van Aelst et al. 2017, p. 14) may harm democratic decision making.

In summary, the relevance for providing research about the power or non-power of framing and its effect on the media`s reputation is very high as democracy depends on reliable news media for an informed electorate. Stephen Coleman (2012) distinguishes between two levels of trust in the news operates: The first level talks about people's expectations as to what that news producers do and are supposed to do. News producers are expected to work accurately. The second level of trust in the news is about sharing a normative function of news among news producers and their audience. Recent developments like the fabrication of fake news produce confusion and stresses the normative discussion around news and what it provides for a democratic culture.

The rise of populist communication strategies, where whole media organizations are called "fake", stresses both of Coleman`s levels of trust in the news. On the first level, Trump influences the media's reputation by questioning their accuracy which is the people's key characteristics for credibility and trust. On the second, Trump talks about specific media organizations as "the enemy of

the American people" and therefore implicates that the news producers oppose the people and thereby departs from a mutual understanding of the media's function in a democracy.

Figure 2: Donald Trump tweet on 17th of February 2017 (Trump 2017b).

This new political interference in the media business model by destroying news media's reputation, credibility, and denying access to information will have an enormous impact on the news media industry itself. At the same time, I assume that the rise of fake news in social media, the conscious dissemination of such to manipulate public opinion, as well as the renaissance of unlabeled party media online, will lead to a deep crisis of confidence. However, mistrust in the media is also a characteristic of a healthy democracy and distinguishes a democracy from an authoritarian system (Müller 2013). Populism shows the same relationship with democracy, where populism is discussed as a threat or a chance to improve the democratic system (Pinto 2017). Consequently, an interesting question in the next years will be how low a level of trust in media democracy can or should be regarding the rising power of populists.

My research underlines the assumption that politicians have an impact on the news media`s reputation and subsequently on peoples' trust in the news. News media as economic companies operate on the basis of two logics: information/non information and profit maximization. They also rely on trust and reputation to secure economic survival. Consequently, losing trust as a kind of currency is detrimental for news media. This currency is under attack by populist politicians, especially Trump in America. Current research is focusing on the reasons and effects of fake news framing and their influence on people's perception of politicians or public issues. The following thesis contributes to this discussion and wants to fill the gap as framing- effects on the media's reputation itself have not yet been examined.

2. Theoretical Background and State of the Art

2.1 Functions of Media in Democratic Society

Talking about functions of media in a sytems-theoretical view, mass communication and journalism provide specific benefits for society. Such functions are criticism and control, producing public, political education and economic functions (stimulate consumption) or social functions as socialization and integration (Burkart 1998, p. 368-400).

Bonfadelli (2010, p. 135) summarizes 4 basis functions of media for humans:

1. Information,

2. Correlation (opinion formation),

3. Transmission (socialization, conveying of values)

4. Gratification (entertainment)

Especially the first three functions are constitutive for democracies. Information is one function that influences opinion formation and the socialization by transmitting public affairs, norms and values. Knowing how politicians want to change or create the rules of social living and whether these concepts fit peoples' expectations is important for elections. Elections are the fundamental requirement for democracy and are based on the rivalry of different political concepts.

Democracy as an ideal situation demands a well-informed citizen. *"The vitality of a representative democracy rests in large part on a voting public that is sufficiently informed about public affairs. Where citizens get their information—and particularly how they view their information sources—is thus a crucial element of understanding the health of a democratic system"* (Jones 2004, p. 60). Strömböck (2005) argues that there are different models of democracy and therefore different normative functions and standards for media and journalism. One of the model is the "competitive democracy", the most realistic model that goes back to Schumpeter. This competitive democracy is characterized by elections where different parties need to compete for the support of the citizens. Consequently, on a normative level, this presumes that citizens have information and knowledge about the most important problems, about the po-

litical alternatives and their concepts. Stromböck (2005, p. 339) further discussed the effects of the electorate`s normative expectations concerning media and journalism: "*First, news journalism should provide information that people can trust and act upon.*" Other normative implications are that news should be proportional, media should focus on the actions of political alternatives and monitor political elites and "*media and journalism should provide basic information about how society and the political system function*" (Strömböck 2016, p. 339)

Furthermore, by observing the political process journalists become watchdogs of the powerful and provide critical scrutiny of government, economy and other parts of society. This is what Edmund Burke called the Fourth Estate in a society (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch 2009).

Castells (2013, p. 194) describes the function of media from a more holistic view where media "*constitute the space where power relationships are decided between competing political and social actors.*" Consequently, getting attention from media, especially news media is a required resource for the political system, as media provides public – the "space" mentioned above by Castells. This relates to the medialization of other systems in our environment, as the political system is oriented towards media`s logic (Meyen 2009). Politics for example *"has to accept the rules of media engagement, the language of the media and media interest"* (Castells 2013, p. 194). Regarding Luhmann, society is a system of different other smaller systems that are interacting with each other through communication (Bergaus 2003). Consequently, the influence of one system on another one is reciprocal. The political system does as well influence medias system thinking of public service broadcasting and it`s politically staffed leadership, or preferred placement of political advertisements in "party-friendly" newspapers. Taking a closer look at the media system itself, journalism and media organizations are defined as two interdependent systems with different aims. Journalism`s focus is to investigate and produce actual information to fulfil the first basic function for society: Information, to provide criticism and control as well as education (Altmeppen 2006, p. 33). Media organizations itself do have economic aims to allocate goods for society, that means in a neoliberal view: profit maximization. News media therefore operates on

two markets, the recipients- and advertising market what means media organizations already adapted to these economic conditions (Altmeppen 2006, p. 255-257). As media organizations face economic pressure and competition for audience market shares, deepening the existing audience as well as expanding reach is an important measurement to secure economic continuity. Consequently, two things might be crucial for the relationship between media and their audience: credibility and trust, as requirements for transmitting information.

Social trust is an important ingredient for cooperation on individual and organizational level (Müller 2013, p. 12). Trust is needed where societal complexity occurs, and trust arises primary based on past experiences with the same or similar actors and situations (Quandt 2012). Societal evolution from face-to-face communication to media communications demands an extension of the concept of trust: from the trust in communication partners to trust in institutions, what Quandt (2012), referring to Putnam (2000) calls "thin" trust. As communication and information got institutionalized and mass media momentum, media organizations have had "*significant power and control over the communication process*" (Quandt 2012, p. 12). This power of media institutions provides a long history of research and criticism questioning media`s manipulation of information. But this power has eroded, as society "*becomes more fragmented into segregated subgroups, without larger unified core (mainstream), it becomes harder for media to address all the interests and communication needs*" (Quandt 2012, p. 13). The societal development into a network society (Quandt 2012), where nowadays user-driven content partly replaces content from traditional media to meet the demand of those fragmented subgroup for information based on their specific interest. Quandt (2012) argues that within a network society, social media as idealized notion brings people together based on interest and opportunity. Social media seems to be cause or consequence of a network society and *"provide an environment wherein individuals can socialize themselves (…)"* and *"partisan media provide coverage of events and issues that are selected and framed in a way to confirm an ideological predisposition"* (Krämer 2017, p. 1302).

Eroding power of established media organizations through a fragmentation of society and the rise of social media and user-driven content are challenging

the normative functions of media for democracy. In addition, the way how people view their information sources is a crucial question for democratic systems (Jones 2004). When we understand society as a combination of different social networks, trust is "*based on an accumulated perception of personalized, individual trust*", mirroring face-to-face situations from early societies (Quandt 2012, p. 14).

The actual dilemma is that trust is given to unknown people or anonymous accounts, with no needed commitment to journalistic accuracy, rules and responsibility for content-making whereas media institutions are increasingly perceived as manipulative and "fake". Quandt (2012) pointed out that network communication (social media communication) is not natural like face-to-face communication, but constructed. Regarding recent developments in fake news and it`s wide dissemination, clickbait production, bots and algorithms unfortunately this network communication is in many ways manipulated, fabricated and biased.

To sum up, in a normative view, trust is the foundation for media to fulfill its function for democracy: provide information for citizens. Coleman (2012, p. 36) concludes that "*tension between contemporary news production values and news consumption frustrations*" matters as "*news only works as a sustainable feature of democratic culture if and when producers and audiences are on the same wavelength*." Shared values and expectations and a normative understanding of what media should do for us is the basis for evaluating media`s performance (Coleman 2012). People evaluate information and it`s source based on trustworthiness and credibility to move along the normative common understanding. So, from an economic perspective, media organizations rely on their perceived credibility and reputation by their consumers to act successfully on the recipients- and advertising market.

2.2 The Crisis of Trust

Jan Müller (2013, p. 21) concluded in his book "Mechanism of Trust" that "*a certain level of distrust towards democratic institutions (including the news media) is a healthy characteristic of a democratic system, a very low level of trust could endanger the proper functioning of the news media system. A very low believability is not helpful when it comes to informing the public*." As we defined

trust as a crucial requirement for democratic society where information is mainly transmitted by established media organizations the results of a Gallup poll show an alarming picture.

In September 2016 Gallup published a report where Americans` trust and confidence in the mass media has dropped to its lowest level. Only 32% of American`s do belief in mass media and this is down eight percentage points from last year (see figure 1).

Americans' Trust in the Mass Media

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, TV and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately and fairly -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or none at all?
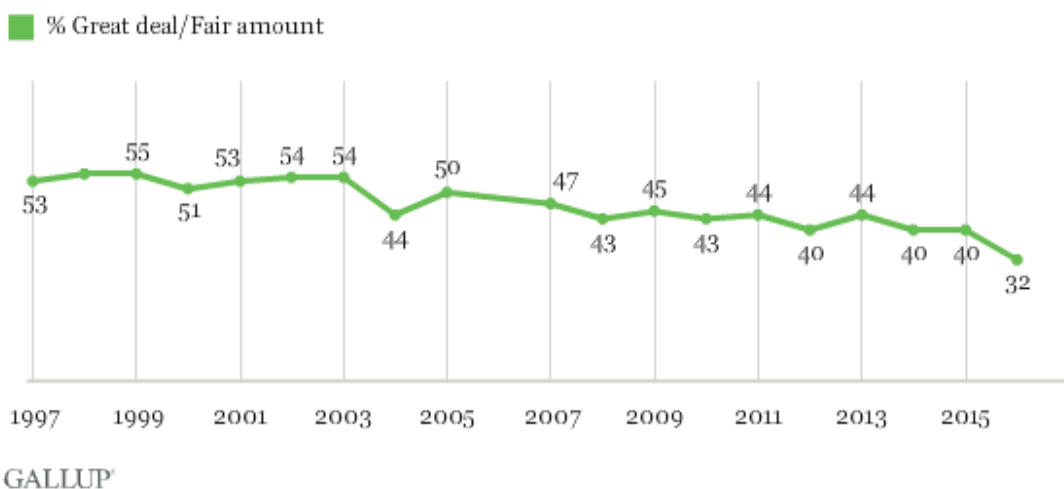
Figure 3: Americans` Trust in Mass Media. Note: *From American`s Trust in the Mass Media* (Gallup, 2016).

Age and political party do have the most influence on the results: the younger the more loss in trust (aged 18 to 49: from 36% in 2015 to 26% in 2016) and republicans trust in media decreased from 32% a year ago to 14% in 2016. Democrats and Independents show only a marginal decline in trust show. Jones (2004, p. 64) underlines these results in his research – where he could provide evidence of the political party`s influence on media trust- that "*among many conservatives and/or Republicans, there is a wide spread perception that the media has a liberal bias.*" The PEW Research Center conducted a survey in 2016 and came to a similar result (see figure 4) This result shows a highly political dimension when it comes to trusting the media. One sentence in the Gallup online summary (Gallup 2016) further outlines the dilemma traditional news media is facing: "*Now, only about a third of the U.S. has any trust*

in the Fourth Estate, a stunning development for an institution designed to inform the public."

Another representative study from the Pew Research Center (Gottfried, J., Barthel, M., Michell, A., 2016) shows the dilemma or paradox between peoples` belief that news organizations are still doing their job (= controlling function) and perception of biased news media.

Three-fourths of Americans think news organizations keep political leaders in line

% of U.S. adults who think that news organizations keep political leaders from doing ...

Things that shouldn't be done	Their job
75%	21%

But nearly the same portion say news media are biased

% of U.S. adults who think that news organizations ... when covering political and social issues
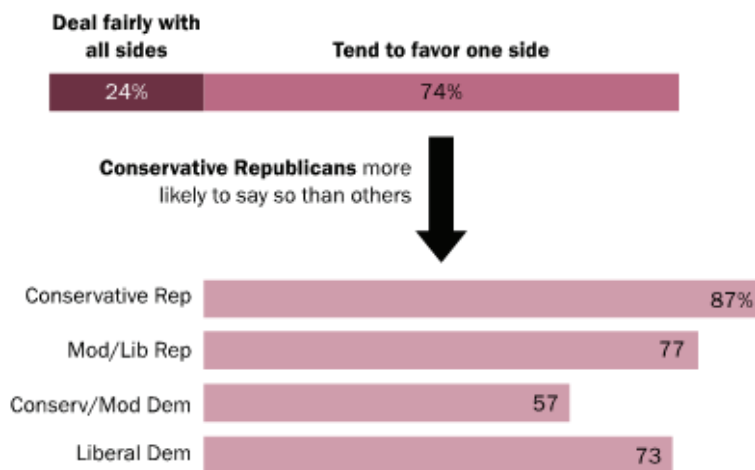
Deal fairly with all sides	Tend to favor one side
24%	74%

Conservative Republicans more likely to say so than others

Conservative Rep	87%
Mod/Lib Rep	77
Conserv/Mod Dem	57
Liberal Dem	73

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 8, 2016.
"The Modern News Consumer"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 4: U.S. adults see the news media as performing its watchdog function – but overwhelmingly, say that news organizations are biased. Note: *From The Modern News Consumer* (Gottfried, J., Barthel, M., Michell, A., 2016).

75% of respondents think that news organizations still have a substantial influence on political leaders by controlling their jobs. On the other hand, the same number of respondents (74%) say that the news media is biased when cover-

ing political and social issues. People trust in the news media as a Fourth Estate, but they do not believe in the news media as a source of unbiased information. An explanation of this paradox might be, that people understand the media`s controlling function of providing the public with information concerning controversial political issues, but the presentation of these issues by the news media is being perceived as being biased.

Further politics face the same low trust as the news media. In April 2017 only 20% of Americans said that they trust the government (figure 5).

% who trust the govt in Washington always or most of the time

Figure 5: Based on different polls from PEW, CNN, CBS/NYT, Gallup, ABC/POST, NES; data and figure provided by PEW Research Center. Last results of PEW poll in April 2015. Note: From *Public Trust in Government: 1958-2017* (PEW Research Center, 2017).

These results show a continuous decrease in trust with the exceptions of some peaks during military interventions. Chanley (2002) explains these peaks (for the time after 9/11) through the shifting of the political agenda from domestic to international issues.

In summary, the trust in politics and the media is on a historic low level and the reasons behind this loss are manifold and not yet fully understood. The Gallup

institute interprets this loss of trust in news media through the rise of social media in recent years. Blogs, vlogs and "status updates" on Facebook or Twitter are increasing and provide an environment where everybody can be a journalist/writer/author and determine the important topics for their audience. Van Aelst et al. (2017, p. 4) argues that the empowerment of citizens through new media technologies, increasing inactivity and political participation might "*undermine one fundamental element of political information environments in democracies: the extent to which they aid citizens in becoming informed about politics and current affairs*". Through the ongoing fragmentation of society into segregated subgroups and the erosion of the so-called mainstream as a unified core, it becomes harder for the news media to meet the public's demand (Quandt 2012). In addition, the editorial change within media companies to produce fast, easy and sensational news in the digital sphere may have led to a bad reputation of journalism, as "*opinion-writing becomes something like the norm*" (Gallup 2016).

On the individual level, there is a positive correlation between trust in the media and politics (Capella 2002) which however also explains the loss of trust in media as well. Jones (2004, p. 71) concludes in studying the National Election Study in 2000, that the loss in trust is more related to political malaise but he invokes additional research "*addressing individuals' perceptions of the media short comings identified in so much of the political communication literature: feelings toward coverage focusing on scandal, horse-race, and strategic aspects of politics; attitudes toward coverage that interprets rather than merely reports the news; and of course, explicitly expressed perceptions of ideological bias.*" Davis (2014, p. 112) attest political journalism being "*more superficial and sensationalist, less informed and less investigative, more desk-bound, more cannibalistic, and generally prone to taking newsgathering short-cuts in its practice*". But this is a chicken and the egg situation, as humans pay more attention to negative information, this subsequently leads to negativity as one of the most important news values in the news media (Ernst et al. 2017, p. 3268). Ernst et al. (2017) refer to research from Esser, Engesser, Matthes & Berganza (2016) who conclude that negativity in the political news media is an often-applied strategy by journalists. Politicians attacking each other, polarized

viewpoints and high tension between two parties are next to negativity atten-tion-grabbing formats. Bartholomé, Lecheler & de Vreese (2015) conducted expert interviews among Dutch journalists to examine the journalist`s interven-tion concerning the conflict frame building process. Results of these interviews show that journalists do contribute to conflict framing "*by using exaggerating language, by orchestrating and by amplifying possible consequences of politi-cal conflict*" (Bartholomè et. al 2015, p. 438). Similar results for American jour-nalists are seen in an early study from 1998. The Project for Excellence in Journalism and the Princeton Survey Research Associates examined the nar-rative techniques of American journalists with the following outcome: "*The press shows a decided tendency to present the news through a combative lens. Three narrative frames — conflict, winners and losers and revealing wrongdoing — accounted for 30% of all stories, twice the number of straight news accounts. The penchant for framing stories around these combative el-ements is even more pronounced at the top of the front page and is truer still when it comes to describing the actions or statements of government officials*" (PEW Research Center 1998).

To recap, journalists use specific narratives to garner attention, which could have led to a perceived bias in news reporting by their consumers and may have harmed trust in the media.

Another study deals with consumers' perception of journalistic sourcing tech-niques, such as using information from Twitter or Facebook. Kruikemeier & Lecheler (2016) used a scenario study and identified a lack of perceived cred-ibility towards using social media (Twitter and Facebook) as a source com-pared to traditional techniques (interviews, press conferences). This study ad-dresses Dutch people, but another PEW Research study (Mitchel et al. 2016) shows the lack of perceived credibility in America concerning using social me-dia sources as a basis for news articles. "*Only 4% of web-using adults have a lot of trust in the information they find on social media*" (Mitchel et al. 2016) – compared to 22% in local news organizations. So, indirectly, American news consumers will very likely be as skeptical concerning social media as a news source for journalists as Dutch consumers.

Nevertheless, tweets by Donald Trump were and still are a prominent source for the American news media. CNN, f.ex., established a website dedicated to

collecting Trump's tweets. Further, Trump's tweets are constantly covered in the news. This discrepancy between the use of social media sources and their perceived lack of credibility by consumers fuels distrust in the media.

There are still many open questions concerning mistrust in the media, whether it is mainly caused by a general mistrust in the establishment, and/or a "home-made" problem by the media industry itself. Mistrust in the established news media is not only an issue in America. In 2015, a study in Germany showed that mistrust in the media had already become a mainstream issue and not just question of political partisanship. The FORSA-Institute did a representative survey in 2015 (Stern 2015) where they asked respondents to agree or disagree to various statements primary stated by right-wing party members of the PEGIDA ("*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*" – translation: "*Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West*"). One statement concerning the media was: "*Die von oben gesteuerten Medien verbreiten nur geschönte und unzutreffende Meldungen.*" (Translation: "*The media controlled by those in power only spreads sugarcoated and inaccurate messages*"),* 18% of respondents say, "this is fully true" and 26% say "rather yes". This PEGIDA statement concerning the media received the highest approval. Another study from "Die Zeit" (Huber 2015) shows similar results, those who mistrust the news media (around 60% saying little or no trust) say it is because of

- willful misinformation and manipulation by the media (27%)
- partisanship (20%)
- poor and flawed investigation (15%), and
- 10% answered that the media is not independent.

A recent online survey from the Austrian magazine "profil" (2017) shows similar results: 46% of the respondents believe that there is a political bias at the ORF (public broadcasting service).

These results show that the audience as citizens notices political influence on the news media. The audience has a normative perception of news media quality and demands independent and non-biased information (Voigt 2016, p. 77-78). Although people have normative expectations of the media`s journalistic quality, they have a rather understanding of news article quality. Voigt (2016, p. 80-83) mentions several qualitative studies in which research found

24

that people have a lesser notion of quality in news articles, if answers within a survey are not defined but open. In addition, Voigt (2016, see chapter 2.5) examines that image and reputation are two main variables that influence the perception of biased or non-biased media. Consequently, People do not evaluate news articles by using a set of characteristics of high-quality journalism to differentiate. Image and reputation of news media serve as appropriate heuristics.

Jones (2004, p. 62) called it a "*public backlash against the media*" as the audience might have enough of sensationalism, horse racing dynamics (who is 1st, 2nd…), and the adversarial relationship among reporters and politicians. In Germany, researchers (Voigt 2016, p. 89) found a similar result in a variety of quantitative studies where recipients criticize that there is too much sensationalism, personalization, and emotionalism in the news. Concerning personalization in media outlets Lee, Lindsay and Kim (2017) further mention the shifts of news delivery from organizations to the delivery by individual journalists through the adoption of social media by media outlets. This development is also found to be harmful to trust. Jayeon Lee (2015, p. 324) proved this in an experiment where "*journalists' online interaction with audiences had a significantly negative effect on audience perceptions in the professional dimension*."

A survey conducted by the Media Insight Project in 2016, an initiative of the American Press Institute (API) and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, shows attributes of trusted news media. This study is worth reading as it shows the differences in perception of trust concerning news platforms (f.ex.: internet vs. newspaper) and topic (f.ex.: politics vs. weather). One interesting result affecting online sources is, that "*the intrusiveness of ads, navigability, load times, and having the latest details — also are critical in determining whether consumers consider a publisher competent and worthy of trust*" (The Media Insight Project 2016, p. 1). This conclusion matches Knobloch-Westerwicks (2014, p. 516) analysis of research results concerning political information online, where "*credibility is often judged by relatively superficial heuristics*". Mentioned examples are site design, search engine rankings, and the visual display of political messages.

What factors drive people to trust news reporting sources?

Percent of...	
Adults who say accuracy is a critical reason they trust a news source	85%
Adults who say having the latest details is a critical reason they trust a news source	76%
Adults who value news reporting that's concise and gets to the point	72%
Digital news consumers who believe it is vital ads not interfere	63%
Political news consumers who highly value experts and data in reporting	79%
Lifestyle news consumers who say it's important their source is entertaining	53%
Facebook news consumers with a lot of trust in the news they see there	12%

Figure 6: Summary of basic values for trusting news sources. Note: *A New Understanding: What Makes People Trust and Rely on News* (The Media Insight Project, 2016)

According to this study, trust in news reporting sources requires accuracy. About 38% of Americans can remember a recent event, where they lost trust in the news media triggered by a perceived bias or inaccuracy (The Media Insight Project 2016, p. 3). Colman (2012, p. 37) defines trust as "*the realization of social expectations*", the more theses expectations (f.ex.: accuracy) are frustrated, "*the greater risk to relationships of trust*".

But what is happens, when people lose trust in the media? People turn towards "alternative" media sources rather than traditionally credible sources. Tsfati and Cappella (2003) f.ex. tested various hypotheses on media skepticism and exposure. One result showed that people who mistrust the mainstream media consumed less information from these sources and turned to non-mainstream news sources such as the internet. Jones`s (2004) research presents a similar result: people who informed themselves online tend to have higher mistrust towards traditional news media. Additionally, he argued that this result, concerning causality, refers to a "*chicken-and egg question[s]*" (Jones 2004, p. 73). Comparable consequences of media exposure are shown by people who have lost trust in established politics. Kemmers (2015, p. 768) took an inductive approach to examine how citizens become politically discontented. In-depth interviews with Dutch nonvoters and PVV voters show *that people who have rejected established politics (…) have consolidated their insights by implementing changes in their media consumption patterns as well as in their respective interpretations of past experiences.*"

Next to people's perception of a biased and manipulating media resulting in a change of media consumption, media indeed face interference by politics which is challenging people's normative understanding of an independent media.

With increasing power of populists and the rise of fake news (see chapter 2.7) as a tool to twist or manipulate public opinion, the ideal of a deliberative democracy becomes undermined and the question of traditional news media as a trusted source is strained. *"A deliberative theory of the public sphere in the Habermasian sense, finally is characterized by a distrust of the news media market`s capacity to deliver relevant and true information. Political and economic power erode trust. Instead, procedures that free news media outlets from the influence of economic and political power are set up (e.g. Public service news media). According to a deliberative theory of the public sphere, the audience should trust the news media that is free from the influence of economic and political power"* (Müller 2013, p. 63).

There is a growing influence of political power on the business model of the news media by selecting how to provide information to influence the formation of opinions. Regarding access to information, the White House briefings for instance and the dependence (Rosen 2017) on the willingness of politicians to answer questions shows a new dimension of political pressure on the work of traditional news media. Populists are aware of their medial power by generating attention in the form of clicks, views and sales. Trump, f.ex. promoted Breitbart during the election through exclusive interviews online (Willis 2016). This "alternative" online news media, however, is mostly used to disseminate or support Trump's political messages. Stephen Bannon, founder and chief of Breitbart News Network underlines this after leaving the White House in August 2017 in his first public comment: *"If there's any confusion out there, let me clear it up: I'm leaving the White House and going to war for Trump against his opponents -- on Capitol Hill, in the media, and in corporate America,"* (Green, Sink, Talev 2017). A further example shows a recent investigative report by some "alternative media" websites in Germany like unzensuiert.de and RT Deutsch. A female journalist applied undercover for an intern ship at unzensuriert.de (original website unzensuriert.at is hosted in Austria). Alexander Höferl (editor in chief and chief of the FPÖ communication office) was asked

about the editorial concept of the German version of unzensuriert.at.: "*Soweit können es wir ja zugeben, wir machen ja nicht dieses Medium, weil uns am unabhängigen Journalismus so sehr gelegen ist, sondern weil wir diese politische Bewegung in gewisser Weise unterstützen wollen.*" (Translation: „ *To this extent, we can admit that we are not creating this medium because we are so interested in independent journalism, but because we want to support this political movement to a certain way.*" (Wallraff 2017).

In a deliberative sense of the public, this development of political influence on the media content erodes the ideal of a well-informed electorate. On one hand, people lose trust in the traditional mainstream media (Gallup, PEW 2016), perceiving bias in direct connection with journalists (Lee 2015) and consequently turn to non-mainstream news sources (Tsfati & Capella 2003). On the other hand, political populists, who are gaining popularity do not get tired of discrediting established news companies as "fake news" in order to encourage confusion and conspiratory thinking. Further, populist politicians run or support non-mainstream news sources that are well-disposed towards their own political concepts and messages. By analyzing Breitbart`s Facebook timeline Bakir and McStay (2017, p. 8) found that Breitbart "*repeatedly slurred mainstream media as rigged in favour of Clinton (…): for instance, "Establishment media are Hillary Clinton campaign workers"*. In addition, Trump started the "Fake News War" against established news media during official press conferences and on Twitter. Breitbart.com in America and unzensuriert.at in Austria are good examples of party driven media sources in new appearance, since these media outlets often position themselves as the "real truth". Taking a closer look at the editorial policy of unzensuriert.at uncovers this "real truth" is of course partisan (figure 7).

Figure 7: Screenshot from unzensuriert.at. Note: From *Impressum* (unszensuriert.at 2017) Taken on 4th of November 2017. (Translation boxed text: "Basic orientation: democratic, critical, polemical and, of course, partisan")

Interestingly, although these "alternative" media outlets are obviously partisan and knowingly disseminate biased information, they show a growing demand as Breitbart News f.ex. recently added offices in London, Texas, and California (Breitbart News 2017). This is and indicator, that their audience is growing despite or because of its publicly expressed partisanship.

Additionally, due to the rise of misinformation (see chapter 2.7) and its fast dissemination through social media, citizens are repeatedly exposed to false or one-sided information. This development is summarized under the term "echo chambers" or "filter bubbles" and describes technical mechanisms (algorithms) based on behavioral psychology. The growing distrust in media results in confusion, insecurity and conspiratory thinking. As a consequence, people withdraw more into their preexisting beliefs and, reduce dissonance by avoiding news that does not support their beliefs and hypotheses on political issues. This selective news exposure leads to a confirmation bias. Confirmation bias occurs when, attitude-consistent messages are preferred to avoid inner conflict (Theory of cognitive dissonance, Festinger 1962) This selective exposure avoids a conflict (Knobloch-Westerwick 2014). In addition, this theory postulates that the more emotionally charged an issue is, the stronger the effect is (Nickerson 1998).

Another effect that goes hand in hand with confirmation bias in news exposure is the hostile media effect. There are two different concepts of this effect: "*the implication of the original hostile media effect is a partisan public perceiving*

bias where non is present (…), the relative hostile effect suggest that partisans fail to fully recognize bias in news that is biased, in instances when that bias is congruent with their views" (Knobloch-Westerwick 2014, p. 518).

Confirmation bias, selective exposure, and the hostile media effect show a highly individual and emotional component in the discussion around the causes and consequences of distrust in media. Emotions have always played an important role in decision making, as it is a "*precognitive filtering of experience and judgment that is often as reliable as careful, rational planning*". (Laybats & Tredinnick 2016, p. 205).

Distrust and trust are strong emotions and essential for any communication. Tsfati and Capella (2005, p. 252) named a few social research results that "*demonstrates that trust is consequential for understanding a variety of social behaviors. Interpersonal trust was found to promote win– win solutions to prisoner-dilemma and other games of social exchange (Orbell & Dawes, 1991). Political trust is related to civic engagement and participation (Putnam,1993,2000). Trust is found to be a predictor of successful psychotherapy (Johnson & Talitman, 1997) and a facilitator of persuasion (Hovland, Janis, & Kelly,1953), various economic activities(Lorenz,1999), and even the delivery of effective health care (Davies & Rundall, 2000).*

Returning to trust as a crucial requirement for a democratic society, an all-time low of trust in the media, especially in the established mainstream media prevents the development of a well-informed electorate.

Summing up these research results I identified six key developments that prepare the ground for mistrust in the media:

1. The rise of social media and the empowerment of citizens to create their own partisan content and news without being bound to journalistic standards and ethics.
2. Change in quality of news production (absence of accuracy) and its delivery (personalization) due to economic pressure of gaining attention that addresses people's perception of news media being biased
3. A general distrust in the establishment that also affects media institutions.

4. The rise of populists, questioning established institutions and news media (Kemmers et al. 2015) and their increasing influence on the media`s "deep grammar" (Rosen 2017)

5. The fast and increasing dissemination of fake news for economic and/or political reasons to manipulate public opinion (Bakir &McStay 2017, Cook 2017, Rochlin 2017)

6. The growing popularity of partisan news websites, that incite conspiracy thinking and deliver "alternative facts".

7. Algorithms that create filter bubbles and keep users selectively exposed to news which confirms their attitude (Bakir & McStay 2017, Wallace 2017, Cook 2017)

The following chapters will deal with three major developments that fuel the crisis of trust:

- The influence of social media on media and politics (chapter 2.3)
- The reduction of complexity and evolving persuasive communication strategies (chapter 2.4 & 2.5)
- The conscious dissemination of misinformation / "fake news" (chapter 2.6)

2.3 Social Media Dynamics concerning News and Politics

The rise of social media is omnipresent, it provides a new digital space where people connect to, exchange opinions, consume and comment on the news.

Twitter, YouTube and Snapchat have grown since 2016 in portion of users who get news on each site

% of each social media site's users who get news there

Sites where news usership increased since 2016

'16-'17 CHANGE

Twitter
2017 — 74%
2016 — 59%
2013 — 52%
+15*

YouTube
32
21
20
+11*

Snapchat
29
17
+12*

Sites where news usership did not change since 2016

Reddit
68
70
62
-2

Facebook
68
66
47
+2

Tumblr
39
31
29
+8

Instagram
27
23
13
+4

LinkedIn
23
19
13
+4
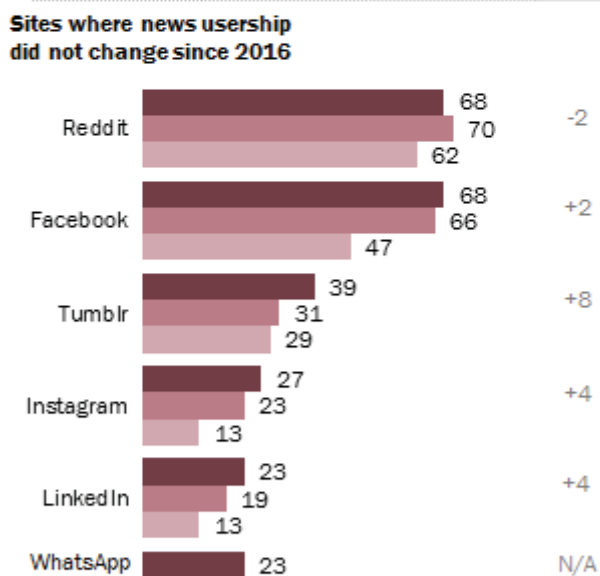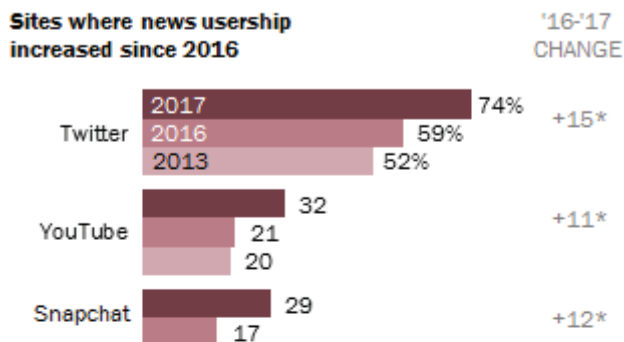
WhatsApp
23
N/A

*Change from 2016 to 2017 is statistically significant.
Note: Snapchat not asked about in 2013. WhatsApp not asked about in 2013 or 2016.
Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.
"News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2017"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 8: Users who get news on social media sites. Note: *From News Use Across Social Media Platforms* (Shearer & Gottfried, PEW 2017)

The traditional, one-way sender-to-receiver mechanism with no direct audience engagement has changed with the rise of modern technology (internet, smartphones, tablets, etc.) and new communication platforms such as social media, forums, and blogs. Organizations and institutions such as companies or political parties have already discovered this digital space as a new way to contact consumers and citizens. But not just institutions have a Twitter or Facebook account. People who work and represent these organizations like journalists, politicians and CEOs have their personal social media accounts and instantly share their news and attitudes on social media platforms to interact with their readers. Consequently, social media has already become a powerful source of information.

In 2016 62% of American's got their news from social media which increased to 67% in 2017 (Shearer & Gottfried, PEW 2017). The driving force behind this increase are older, less educated, and non-white Americans.

Especially the share of people who get their news on Twitter significantly climbed from 59% to 74% (figure 8, Shearer & Gottfried, PEW 2017). The authors explain this through Donald Trump's heavy use of Twitter and the fact, that news outlets already realized the potential for those platforms. In addition, Twitter "*spent the year promoting the platform's potential for news publishers and has announced launches for multiple news streaming partnerships. YouTube launched and expanded YouTube TV, and the site added a "breaking news" summary on its homepage. It also continues to be used for disseminating information to small, dispersed communities. Snapchat won over a number of big news names this year for its group of Discover publishers: CNN, NBC, and The New York Times joined, and the platform plans on continuing to bring in others"* (Shearer & Gottfried, PEW 2017).

But what kind of online news is getting shared? Bobkowski (2015) refers to studies of Berger & Milkmann (2012) and Boczkowski & Mitchelstein (2012) with the following results: Readers "*share news that is noncontroversial, inspires awe, anger, or anxiety and that contains positive and emotional language, practical utility, interest and surprise*" (Bobkowski 2015, p. 321). Bobkowski (2015) further contributed to these studies with an experiment and concluded that on average, those who consume news, share news that contains information utility because they perceive this article to be informational. This is not very surprising, but the second research finding becomes more meaningful "*opinion leaders tend to share news irrespective of informational utility because they discern information utility even in news that, objectively speaking, lacks information utility*" (Bobkowski 2015, p. 334). This indicates, that not just the perceived utility of news itself decides whether content get shared. The role within the social network – being an opinion leader with high social capital – also has influence on social media news sharing.

The development of social media news sharing is increasingly becoming a form of news distribution. Facebook, for example, became more responsible for referred traffic to major news sites similarly to Google search (Parse LY Referrer Dashboard). News producers, as well as researchers, need to keep an eye on this surge in social media news distribution. Social media news

sharing implies and generates social and cultural capital through liking, favoriting, voting, tagging, bookmarking, re-posting and commenting on news articles (Dwyer & Martin 2016, p. 3).

Parse LY detects topics starting with a corpus of articles from the Parse.ly network of online media sites (+2500 sites) published in 2016.

Figure 9: How Audiences Find Articles, by Topic, Jan. 2016–Dec. 2016. Note: From *The Authority Report* (Parse.ly 2016)

10,020,061 articles were vectorized and classified by main topics. The results are quite interesting: depending on the topic different social media sites are responsible for external traffic. When it comes to "US Presidential" topics Facebook with 59,5% is the most referred external source, followed by Google Search with 24,6%, Google News with 4,3% and Twitter with 4,1%. The other 7,1% are generated by drudgereport.com, Yahoo!, Bing and reddit. Twitter got its highest share 10,6% concerning articles on "Sports" news but in general is almost always under the top 3 external referral sources. These figures represent the highly political dimension of social media news sharing.

Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook are already main channels for political institutions and their players, to actively communicate with their potential electorate, especially during election campaigns (Stieglitz, Dang-Xuan 2012, p. 278). Castells (2009, p. 230) stresses the importance of social media for political campaigning and mentions candidate` funding of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

"*Social media offer political actors another channel to promote themselves and actively, personally and directly communicate with their electorate and provide politicians with unmediated and inexpensive access to voters*" (Golbeck,

34

Grimes & Rogers 2010; Jacobs & Spierings 2016 cited in Ernst et al. 2017a). Especially populists use social media to connect with their potential voters as it supports one core concept of populism: people-centrism. Populists pursue four communication strategies in the people-centric approach: demonstrating "*the closeness to the people, stress their virtues, praise their achievements or describe them as a monolithic group*" (Ernst et al. 2017a, p. 1349).

Ernst et al. (2017a) studied to what extend politicians use populist communication strategies on social media by examining six Western countries and two social media platforms: Twitter and Facebook. The study proves that politicians at the edge of the political spectrum (left or right) and politicians from the oppositions mostly use populist communication strategies. The ongoing (scientific) question still is, if the use of social media helps politicians to win elections especially after Trump won the US election. "*One explanatory narrative that quickly emerged was that social media, by acting as portals of shared information determined to be sought (algorithmically or otherwise) by users, may have helped Trump win by cultivating ideological filter bubbles that lacked cross-cutting information*" (Groshek & Koc-Michalska 2017, p. 1390). Groshek and Koc-Michalska (2017) conducted a study to examine what sort of social media usage (active, passive or uncivil) relates to an increased support for populist candidates (left and right). The researchers found evidence that "*respondents who passively follow political information, or that were more uncivil on social media and spend more time on Facebook were more likely to support Republican populism. Those who were politically active on social media were less likely to support Republican populism but were significantly more likely to support Democrat populism*" (Groshek & Koc-Michalska 2017, p. 1399). This research shows that social media usage/behavior (active, passive or uncivil) is at least a mediator between the support and non-support for populists.

Beside the people-centrist dimension of populism that social media supports, the internet in general has the following functions for populists: "*representation of the relationship between leaders and 'the people,' justifying the exclusion of outgroups, the conceptual elaboration of the right-wing populist ideology, developing a right-wing populist lifestyle and identity, and circumventing the traditional media*" (Krämer 2017, p. 1294). Further Krämer (2017) explains this circumvention of traditional media by populists as it ensures the dissemination

of their unfiltered messages and their specific narrative of issues. *"On the longer term, wean parts of the audience from the traditional media once they become familiar with the anti-media populism and different framing of issues on populist platform"* (Krämer 2017, p. 1303). Furthermore, this leads to a paradox, as populists denounce established news media when it fits their agenda (Krämer 2017 ref. to Holt & Haller 2016) and yet still need traditional mass media as a platform.

The rise of social media as a news source is cause or consequence of a network society resulting in an ongoing fragmentation into segregated groups (Quandt 2012). Established news media struggles to meet these specific demands for information as the mainstream erodes. At the same time anti-media statements become a common narrative of especially right-wing politicians, which strengthens partisan media and incite people`s distrust in established news sources. Consequently, social media plays a significant role regarding the normative functions of media in democracies in general (Bonfadelli 2010): information, correlation (opinion formation), transmission (socialization, conveying of values) and gratification (entertainment). As democracy in an idealized situation requires a well-informed electorate, trust in media is crucial for the transmission of information. As social media contributes to the increasing dissemination of fake news (chapter 3.7) and populists use this medium to spread their anti-media narrative, the crisis of trust also continuous in the social media sphere.

In summary:

- Social media already is a main source of information, especially for news. 67% of Americans get their news on social media. (Shearer & Gottfried, PEW 2017). However, only 4% of web-using adults have a lot of trust in the information they find on social media (Mitchel et al. PEW 2016).
- Sharing news via social media has a significant impact on the news organization as well. Facebook became more responsible for referred traffic to major news sites comparable to Google search (Parse LY Re-

    ferrer Dashboard) When it comes to a political topic Facebook gener-
ates the most referred traffic to news sites which indicates the highly
political dimension of social media.

- Social media is already one of the main channels for political communi-
cation especially during elections (Stieglitz, Dang-Xuan 2012, Castell
2009) and for populist parties (Ernst et al. 2017a, Krämer 2017). Social
media fulfills core communication strategies for populism such as peo-
ple- centricity: Direct messaging without gate-keeping by the media and
journalists, thereby allowing the dissemination of their populist specific
narrative in case of anti-media populism for example.

2.4   The Reduction of Complexity: Trust, Image, Reputation

The crisis of trust in the media and the change in news access and dissemi-
nation caused by social media, are questioning the social capital of news me-
dia companies. Additionally, I assume that the reputation of the established
news companies is under attack by populists and that the rise of fake news is
negatively supporting this downward trend in trust. Dwyer & Martin (2016, p.
3) describe liking, favoriting, voting, tagging, bookmarking, re-posting and
commenting on news articles as part of the social capital. "*At a micro level
these social signals work to demonstrate taste preferences, indicate social sig-
nificance, invite attention, and generate social and cultural capital* (Dwyer &
Martin 2016, p. 3)*"*. Moreover, from a theoretical perspective trust, reciprocity
and cooperation are main ingredients for transactions in a social network: "*So-
cial capital is a capability that arises from the prevalence of trust in a society
or in certain parts of it* (Fukuyama 1996, p. 26)".

Besides using social media as an information source (Shearer & Gottfried,
PEW 2017), these platforms allow users to interact with one another and to
share opinion and information on politics, products and services. Users share
their individual experiences by recommending a product, an article, a company
(5-star ratings and comments on Amazon, likes and shares on Facebook, re-
tweeting on Twitter, etc.). They even form their own public for discussing is-
sues in the form of #hashtags on Twitter for instance. This can have an impact

on the image, the reputation of companies, and finally on the individual's trust towards organizations in general.

Trust is not only an emotion we have towards somebody or something. Since democracy relies on informed citizens, trust is, especially in times where information overload is omnipresent, a way to reduce complexity. "*As not everyone can be everywhere, and some accounts about what affects us must be provided by reporting witness, we need to be able to rely upon the reputation of mediated accounts without having to check and recheck every single report that is given to us*" (Coleman 2012, p. 36). A study of Lee, Lindsay and Kim (2017) underlines this specific mechanism of trust: „*when participants felt highly overloaded with news information they received on social media, it was more likely they would selectively expose themselves to certain news sources they trust more than others* (Lee et al. 2017, p. 260-261)". Consequently, news is a commodity of experience and trust (Voigt 2016, p. 30) and people trust a news source because they connect a positive image and credibility with news organizations. Voigt (2016) concluded that people, who knew the media organizations behind the news article do not need to evaluate each news article regarding its quality. A perceived image and brand of a media organization is an appropriate heuristic technique to rate the individual article. In conclusion, image and reputation influences the perceived quality of news and exposure to news. Further, good image and reputation generate trust towards individuals and social capital for news organizations.

Image and reputation are two related concepts of a company's immaterial assets. Image defines attributed characteristics from individuals for a company/organization/institution (Bentele 1988, p. 408). Reputation is gained through the shared experience and shared image of an object by many individuals (interpersonal) or through media-transmitted experience and image (online feedback, blogs, vlogs, tweets…) (Einwiller 2014, p. 371). There are different definitions and theoretical distinctions between image and reputation. Voigt (2016, p. 126) for example uses the term "public image" to describe the term reputation: an aggregated perception of a medias` brand in society influenced by the reception of other public players. The "personal image" (Voigt 2016) defines the perception on the individual level affected by usage-experience, social network, and the "public image" described above. In concepts of

reputation other public players like the media, politicians, civil society organizations, etc. play important roles in what constitutes a good reputation.

Nguyen and Leblanc (2001, p. 229) describe the relationship between corporate image (like Voigt`s "personal image") and corporate reputations ("public image") as follows: "*The former is the firm's portrait made in the mind of a consumer, while the latter is the degree of trust (or distrust) in a firm`s ability to meet customer's expectations on a given attribute. Corporate image and reputation are thus the results of an aggregation process which incorporates diverse information used by the consumer to form a perception of the firm*." Additionally, even if consumers have not experienced product or service of a company, they may already have preconceived perceptions that were influenced by word-of-mouth, for example. By investigating the impact of corporate image and corporate reputation on customer's retention

Very loyal news consumers follow news at a much higher rate

% of news consumers who follow the news all or most of the time:

	Very loyal	Somewhat loyal	Non-loyal
	67%	**45%**	**32%**

They are also more likely to think media organizations do a good job informing people and to trust the info they provide

% of each type of news consumers who think national news organizations do very/fairly well at keeping them informed

	Very well	Fairly well	Net
Very loyal	32%	55%	87%
Somewhat loyal	16	57	73
Non-loyal	11	51	61
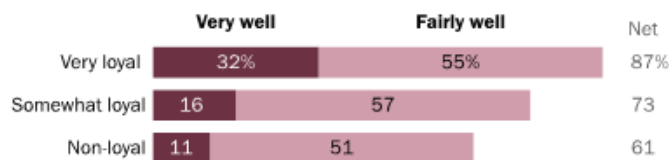
% of each type of news consumers who trust the information from national news organizations a lot/some

	Trusts the information **a lot**	Trusts the information **some**	Net
Very loyal	26%	59%	85%
Somewhat loyal	12	60	72
Non-loyal	7	53	61

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 8, 2016.
"The Modern News Consumer"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 10: Very loyal customers follow news at a much higher rate, survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb.8, 2016. Note: From *The Modern News Consumer* (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel & Shearer, PEW 2016)

decisions in service, the authors concluded that loyalty is higher, the more favorable a corporate's image and reputation is (Nguyen & Leblanc 2001, p.228). Corporate reputation is associated with credibility – "*the believability of its stated intentions*" – "*what a firm says it will do and what it actually does.*" In

summary, a positive reputation has a positive influence on a customer's loyalty. Further, customer loyalty also influences the trust in media organizations. A survey of the PEW Research Center (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel & Shearer, PEW 2016) shows that "*very loyal news consumers follow news at a much higher rate. They are also more likely to think media organizations do a good job informing people and to trust the info they provide.*" (see figure 1).

As mentioned above a good reputation is important for customer loyalty and furthermore for credibility towards a company or institution, and finally for gaining trust. All these "concepts of perception and its following actions" influence each other (see figure 12) and are important value-indicators to rate and explain a company's performance.
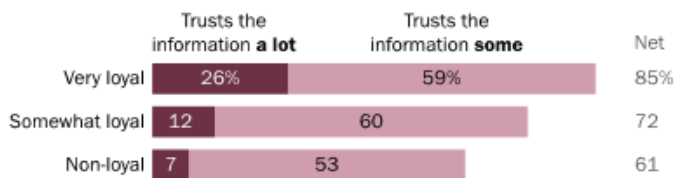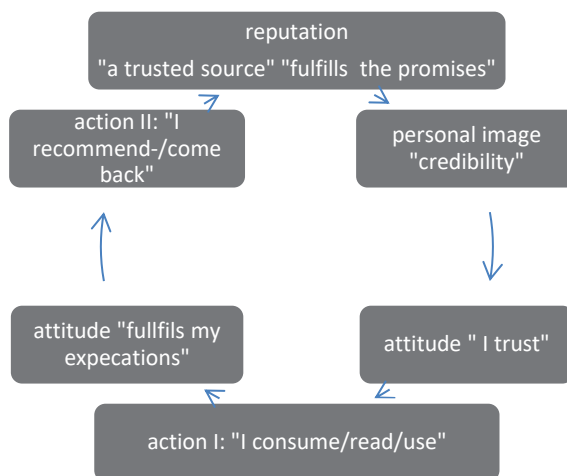

Figure 11: "process of influence" – concept of perception and actions. Own representation.

Reputation has a double function concerning trust: firstly, it gives information about "creditworthiness" and secondly, it is a sanctioning mechanism against a person or organization (Herger 2006, p. 49 ref. to Rippersperger 1998, p. 183). Reputation cannot exist without the public, public communication and opinion. It is strongly connected to the image- concept and to the structure of mass- and online media.

With an interesting study on the brand image of media and the subsequent influence on the recipient's perception of quality, Voigt (2016, p. 216) saw that image has the strongest influence on the following quality dimensions of the news media: impartiality and objectivity. These two quality dimensions are frequently discussed topics both by the media itself and by politicians. Especially right-wing parties accuse the news media of biased: remembering the "fake

news" statements by Donald Trump during his first press conference (New York Times 2017). the term "Lügenpresse" by PEGIDA (Matheis 2014) or "Rot-funk" by FPÖ (FPÖ press release 2016).

These allegations by politicians against the media might harm the media`s brand image and influence the audience's opinion concerning the quality of the news. As already mentioned, Voigt (2016) identified that if recipients perceive a media brand as credible, competent and of high quality, they will evaluate the quality of the news from these media brands as positive. Consequently, I assume that the influence of image on some specific characteristics will work also in a negative way.

When we define reputation and image as constitutive for trust, the following results show a potential challenge for news producers within the rise of social media news sharing. The PEW Research Center published that just 52% of respondents could recall the brand of a link through social media – in contrary to 78% when news links came directly from a news organization's email, texts, and alerts. "*These data reveal a potential challenge for news producers in creating brand awareness among those who land on their content from links sent or posted by others*" (Mitchell, Gottfried, Shaerer & Lu 2017). Regarding these image and reputation issues, the rise of social media as a news source (see chapter 2.3) and the lack of source and brand awareness, Facebook started to show publisher logos in the search and trending surfaces. This was a direct outcome of the Facebook Journalism Project (Anker 2017).

Besides the negative campaigning of populists and the difficulty to stay visible as a news source within social media, another threat for building credibility and trust is the tendency of personalization as a way to reduce complexity. This is triggered by the news organizations themselves when journalists act as a representative on social media platforms and spread news. This is similarly a challenge for brand, image, and reputation management as the news is separated from their imbedded media organization and journalists are in direct contact with the consumers. An interesting experiment by Lee (2015) shows that the news is seen more subjectively and biased by a journalists' audience if it is shared through the journalist's account.

Another study based on US survey data, examines the effects of personalization and took into question whether the perception of the journalistic quality

makes a difference. If the audience perceives something as "good journalism", the more likely people will engage with journalists. Additionally, they found, that these "*expectations of journalists' performance on social media are explored as a moderator of perceived editorial bias*" (Gil de Zuniga, Diehl & Ardèvol-Abreu 2016, p. 1). These results show how critical journalist accounts on social media can be for the reputation of a news organization. Reputation management needs to balance among positive and negative effects of personalization.

To sum up, reducing complexity is necessary for people to distinguish "good" from "bad" information. Reputation ("a trusted source") is one concept or heuristic technique to do so. Working on image and reputation is an important strategy for established news organizations to oppose the "fake news" accusations by politicians and other parts of the public. CNN, for example started a "fact first" advertising campaign saying that an apple is still an apple, although others might say it's a banana (CNN 2017). The New York Times launched a marketing campaign as well named "The truth is more important now than ever" (The New York Times 2017c).
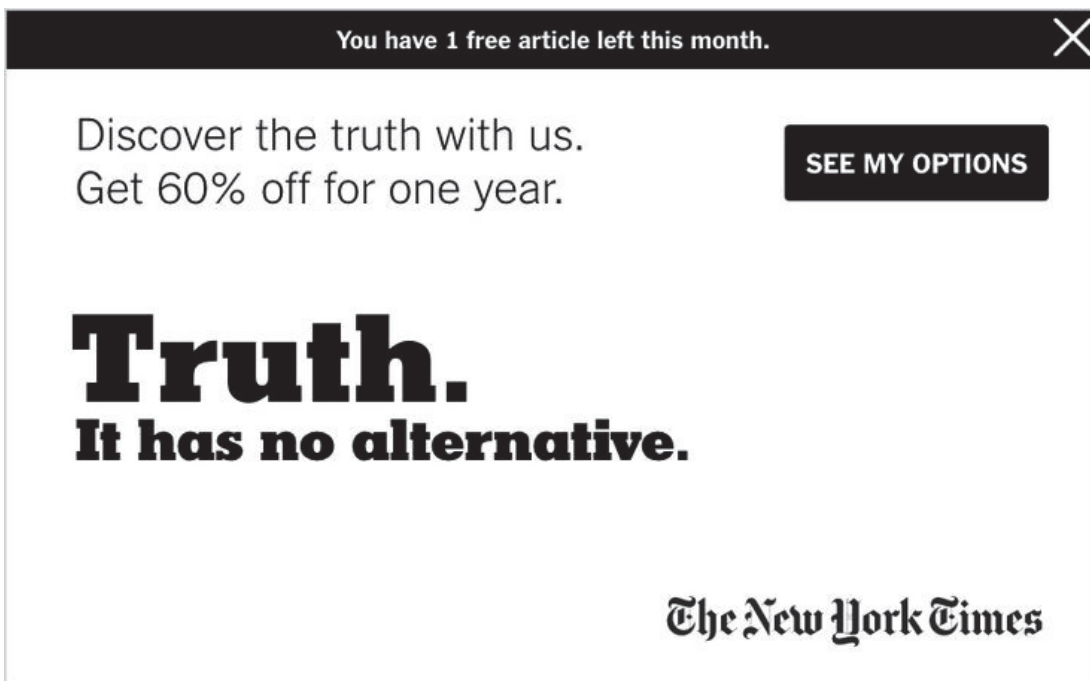
Figure 12: The New York Times: "Truth" -Campaign – Online Banner. Note: From *Pinterest* (Madame Veille, 2017)

In Austria, the Union of Newspapers, "VÖZ" started the "Jedes Wort wert" (translation: "Worth Every Word") initiative to restore trust in newspapers

through testimonials. This campaign tries to persuade individuals on the one hand and advertisers on the other hand to regain trust in print media.

Figure 13. VÖZ: "Jedes Wort wert" -Campaign. Note: From *Jedes Wort wert* (VÖZ 2017). (Translation: "*Austria's newspapers and magazines are worth every word, because the sharpen our perception*".)

These examples demonstrate that in 2017 news media organizations have already begun to work on improving their image, on restoring trust, and influencing the individual's choice back towards traditional news media companies.

Another influence on the media brand choice, that cannot be addressed by established news companies is the individual's political view and the resulting selective exposure and confirmation biased (see chapter 2.2).

Polarization is ubiquitous in the American political system as there are two strong parties that shape the political landscape: Republicans and Democrats. This polarization is also reflected in the voter's media consumption:

Figure 14: Trump, Clinton Voters Divided in Their Main Source for Election News. The survey was conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 12, 2016, among 4,183 adults who are members of Pew Research Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel. Note: From *Trump, Clinton Voters Divided in Their Main Source for Election News* (PEW 2016)

While Clinton voters show a more fragmented use of media brands for election campaign news, 40% of Trump voters relied on information by Fox News. CNN was the preferred news channel for 18% of Clinton voters and only for 8% of Trump voters. Interesting is within each voter-group Facebook ranks under the Top 3. Social Media as a news source has arrived for the broader public (see chapter 2.3)

Further "*American television has seen the emergence of decidedly partisan TV news channels such as Fox News (e.g. Stroud 2008), whereas many European broadcasting systems are subject to regulation to ensure balanced TV news coverage and a certain extent of news broadcasting*" (Knobloch-Westerwick 2014, p. 508). Knobloch-Westerwick (2014, p. 508) argues, that the media environment of a country has "*important implications for exposure and selection, perception, and processing of political content.*"

This polarization of media brand usage of news along political views is a well-known phenomenon. Knobloch-Westerwick (2015, p. 145) mentioned the experimental research of Ivengar and Hahn (2009) based on television and radio

news brands where participants picked out news story headlines they wanted to read. The study found that Republicans preferred news attributed to FOX News whereas Democrats and liberals chose CNN and NPR but avoided Fox News.

Finally, besides image and reputation, political views also serve as a process to reduce information overload and influences the choice of a certain media brand. While the first issue is better addressable by established news media companies through campaigns and investments in news article quality. The second issue demands a deeper examination of the reader's motivation to consume or not consume a specific media brand.

Summarizing this chapter leads to the following findings:

- Trust and the related concepts of image and reputation are the social capital of news media organizations. The prevalence of trust is essential for social capital (Fukuyama 1996) and actions such as liking, favoring describe liking, favoring, voting, tagging, bookmarking, re-posting and commenting on news articles (Dwyer & Martin (2016, p. 3) as well as sharing these, are part of the social capital

- Trust, image, and reputation are mechanism that reduce complexity. In times of information overload these mechanisms explain people`s selective exposure (Coleman 2012, Lee, Lindsay and Kim 2017) and their perception of news quality (Voigt 2016)

- Reputation *"is the degree of trust (or distrust) in a firm`s ability to meet customer's expectations on a given attribute"* and is associated with credibility – "*the believability of its stated intentions"* – "*what a firm says it will do and what it actually does*" (Nguyen and Leblanc 2001, p. 228-229).

- Right-wing politicians attack this "*believability of its stated intentions*" by destroying the media company`s image and further their reputation (Fake news, "Lügenpresse"). Voigt (Voigt 2016, p. 221) identifies that if recipients perceive a media brand as credible, competent and of high quality, they evaluate the quality of news within these media brands as positive. Consequently, the influence of image on some specific characteristics will work in a negative manner as well.

- Besides the "negative campaigning" against news media by politicians, personalization (Gil de Zuniga, Diel & Ardèvol-Abreu 2016, Lee 2015) and social media news sharing behavior (Mitchell, Gottfried, Shaerer & Lu 2017) are threats to the media`s image and reputation.
- Next to reputation and image, political views additionally have an impact on the choice of a news media brand as a source. Knobloch-Westerwick 2014, 2015, Ivengar and Hahn 2009, PEW 2016)

As this thesis is focusing on the impact of politicians on the media's reputation the following chapter will approach the effect of creating a special narrative or frame, in this case the "Fake News"- narrative.

2.5   Impact of Framing

The narrative of the established news media in which they transmit objective information is being questioned by politicians, predominantly by right-wing parties. Consequently, news media organizations have become an opponent in political matters.

Donald Trump's electoral campaign focused on two opponents: Hillary Clinton as a representative of the "establishment" and the established news media organizations (f. ex: ABC, NBC, CNN, CBS, MSM, MSNBC, The New York Times and The Washington Post). He started repeatedly using the term "fake news" and accusing traditional and well-established news media organizations of writing the untruth. Castells (2013, p. 228) talks about a "*three-pronged strategy*" of political campaigning where firstly, political campaigns shall secure the historical and loyal electoral base. Secondly political campaigns shall "*demobilize or confuse the core constituency of the opponent, particularly by pinpointing her flaws or wrongdoing, or the contradiction between the political opponent and the values of her potential voters*;(…)". And the thirdly, the strategy tries to win the independents and undecided people. Independents are more sensitive to negative information and messages which explains the high usage of negative campaigning of politicians' in the media (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Hollihan, 2008 cited in Castells 2013, p. 159)*.* Consequently, the established news media is an opponent of Donald Trump and blaming them as "fake

news" accords to the second strategy explained above – *confusing the core constituency.*

As people need to rely on the news media for political information, destroying the trust and reputation of the news media as a core constituency is an obvious strategy for populist political campaigning. Populists take an existing narrative like "fake news" or "Lügenpresse", which generates already existing attributes to this narrative in our mind – "the media is biased", "they write the untruth", "they manipulate us", to influence the way we think and talk about a media company (image and reputation). This attempt to construct messages and inject meaning is called framing.

Framing as a concept in understanding media or communication effects is a very popular area of research in communication science. Cacciatore et al. (2016, p. 8) discuss the different concepts and definitions of frames and framing which make it difficult to have a clear understanding of "*what exactly constitutes framing*". The overlap of this concept with already well-known models such as priming, agenda-setting, persuasion, schemata and scripts makes it difficult to define the theoretical scope of framing and to find methods of operationalization (Cacciatore et al. 2016). Entman (2004, p. 5) for example provides a broad definition of framing and describes it as the process of "*selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution.*" Castells (2009, p. 158) postulates that "*only those frames that are able to connect the message to the pre-existing frames in the mind become activators of conduct.*" From a cognitive-linguistics view, Georg Lakoff (2008, p. 20) defines frames as smaller narratives of a complex narrative similar to scripts: "*A president may see himself as a Hero rescuing a Victim-nation from a Villain-dictator. Or as leading a Battle of Good Against Evil. The roles in narratives that you understand yourself as fitting give meaning to your life, including the emotional color that is inherent in narrative structures*" (Lakoff 2008, p. 27).

As an example, Lakoff (2008, p. 93) describes the "war on terror" narrative, a metaphor the Bush administration imposed and this metaphor and made stick. The event of 9/11 is a national trauma. traumas lead to a change in the synapses in the brain most readily and dramatically. The "war on terror" metaphor became the narrative or the frame for the American Middle East involvement.

""War on terror" means war without end. It was used by the Bush administration as a ploy to get virtually unlimited war powers—and further domestic influence—for the president. How? Because the mention of "terror" activates a fear response, and fear activates a conservative worldview, in which there is a powerful leader, willing to use his strength, who offers protection and security" (Lakoff, 2008, p. 93).

Elisabeth Wehling a popular German linguist at Berkeley University defines political framing as a way to inject facts and messages with their own morality. She further explains that Trump uses political framing perfectly by working together with experts who previously advised Bush to linguistically prepare the war on Irak (Eckert and Huber 2017) known as "the war on terror".

In view of survey results (chapter 2.2) distrust in the media seems to be a pre-existing frame or narrative within the publics' mind. As discussed in chapter 2.1, populists use the "production of confusion" as a communication strategy. They oppose facts, use the label alternative facts, criticize the establishment by using conspiracies and question the credibility of news media. Additionally, people feel insecure about their news sources and what is true or false. The ongoing public debate around the fabrication of fake news (see chapter 2.6) to manipulate peoples' minds, could be fruitful ground for Donald Trump's "fake news" narrative. The term "fake news" used by Donald Trump for all types of news media which write negative articles and reports about him is a well-thought-out frame.

The term "fake news" in its original definition describes a hoax or a willful misinformation which pretends to be factually accurate (Wikipedia 2017a). Newspaper hoaxes have always existed, but the rise of social media platforms has increased their dissemination to a broader audience (more details in chapter 2.6). "*There is a cottage industry of websites that just fabricate fake news designed to make one group or another group particularly riled up*," said Fil Menczer, a professor at Indiana University who studies the spread of misinformation (Solon 2016). This is probably one of the reasons why fake news is currently a prominent topic in the public. Another reason is the question of the influence and manipulation caused by fake news concerning Hillary Clinton and how it helped Donald Trump win the presidential election. Therefore, the

public debate regarding the effects of fake news on people is a very popular one.

Donald Trump consistently addresses the existing issue and emotion of people feeling manipulated. Further, Trump charges this term with a different meaning, more related to the German term "Lügenpresse". This word was invented by the NSDAP, to discredit Jewish and oppositional journalists. The intention was to represent the press as the enemy and the political opponent against the German people- in general, to define an in-group and an out-group. Consequently the "Lügenpresse" became a dual enemy: an enemy of the people AND the political party itself. The rise of this German term in recent years amoung right-wing parties led linguists to declare it the "Unwort des Jahres 2014" (Translation: Non-Word of the year) (Der Spiegel 2015). Donald Trump, applies the term fake news to whole news media companies. He does not refer to specific articles as being true or false. Instead, he accuses and directly addresses the news media outlets, that did not politically support him during the election as fake news. As well as the "Lügenpresse" narrative Trump describes these "fake news" media as the enemy of the people (figure 16). By using this frame Donald Trump wants to confuse, spread insecurity and destroy the news media's credibility, reputation, image and moreover the trust of the people in the news media.

Figure 15: Tweet of Donald J. Trump on the 17th of February (Trump 2017b).

Frames reduce complexity by leaving gaps in information and activating emotions, memories and preconceived schemata. The higher the resonance and magnitude of their repetition, the greater the effect of frames or messages in general. Donald Trump did not get weary of using the term "fake news" repeatedly during his first and second official press conference as the new president of the USA. The so-called "truth-effect" says, that "*recipients are more likely to hold a statement as true if they hear the statement multiple times*" (Ernst et al. 2017b, p. 3265).

Ernst et al (2017b, p. 3267) mentioned several studies on message credibility where message repetition can influence attitudes of recipients, especially when the message communicator is credible. The authors suggest that the truth-effect is limited by specific moderators such as overexposure and negativity within a message. Humans pay more attention to negative information, which is called the "attention bias hypothesis". An online experiment of Ernst et al. (2017b) examines the effects of statement repetition and message negativity regarding political campaigning. "*The results demonstrate that especially in combination with high repetition, negativity is a crucial moderator to explain a decrease of credibility judgments and attitude towards a political issue*" (Ernst et al 2017b, p. 3277). Another experiment by Lecheler and de Vreese (2011) investigates the duration of framing effects. Results show that framing effects are persistent, depending on an individual's political knowledge. The effects on a person with high or low political knowledge last less long than on an individual with moderate political knowledge. These results show the significant power of frames and why it is important to deconstruct political messages and create awareness to this topic.

Summarizing the impact of framing, I come to the following conclusions

- Frames are part of a narrative (Lakoff 2008) which try to connect to pre-existing frames in people's minds (Castells 2009).
- The term "fake news" is a frame since it activates preexisting frames in the people's mind such as distrust in the media and the feeling of being manipulated. Trump as a populist is using this term to spread insecurity and confusion and to destroy the image of the news media, which he perceives as political opponents.

- Repetition of messages plays a significant role concerning credibility (truth-effect) but negativity and overexposure of a message are crucial moderators of this effect (Ernst et al 2017b)
- Framing effects are persistent (depending on an individual's political knowledge- high or low political knowledge shortens the framing effect, moderate knowledge shows persistent framing effects) (Lecheler and de Vreese 2011)

Trump's usage of the term "fake news" is used as a political frame. It connects preexisting attitudes/frames and is charged with meaning that spans back from the historical (Nazi Regime- "Lügenpresse") to recent developments regarding the rise of fabricated news – the "real fake news". Fake News or misinformation as a political and economic instrument is a current issue that undermines the media's normative functions for a democratic society. Therefore, I would like to address this phenomenon in a separate chapter.

2.6 Fake News – the Real Ones

The reason to address this phenomenon is that in my view, the rise of fake news will enduringly change people's opinion on and relation to media and political information. During the US election 2016, it was, and it still is an un-answered question if fake news manipulated peoples` mind and consequently their votes.

Fake news itself is not a new phenomenon in media-transmitted society. Its main objective is to gain attention and create confusion around controversial topics. An article by David Umberti (2016) in the Columbia Journalism Review named a few newspaper hoaxes from the past. For example, the six-part se-ries, "Great Astronomical Discoveries Lately Made," which detailed the sup-posed discovery of life on the Moon in 1835 published by The New York Sun. He argues that the one thing that changed is the exacerbation of fake news through mass distribution networks. Umberti pleads to name these news items more precisely as "*misinformation, deception and lies*".

Bakir and McStay (2017, p: 1) cite different definitions for fake news "*including "propaganda entertainment" (Khaldarova and Pantti 2016 p: 893); "using satire to discuss public affairs" (Marchi 2012 p: 253); and content that "blurs lines between nonfiction and fiction" (Berkowitz and Schwarzt 2016 p: 4."*

The authors (2017, p. 1) distilled these definitions from literature and define fake news "as *either wholly false or containing deliberately misleading elements incorporated within content or context.*" Rochlin (2017) mentions in his paper "Fake News: Belief in Post-Truth" that Melissa Zimdars, from Merrimack College started an open platform to collect fake news websites. There, she defines fake news as an organization of "*sources that entirely fabricate information, disseminate deceptive content, or grossly distort actual news report*"(Zimdars 2017).

Although the term fake news and the distribution of false information is not new, the contemporary discussion around fake news must be seen against the backdrop of a long tradition of political and economic efforts to influence and persuade public opinion. Bakir and McStay (2017, p. 5) argue that the new furor around fake news is the result of the following five features of the digital media ecology:

1. *Financial decline of legacy news*
2. *The news cycle's increasing immediacy*
3. *Rapid circulation of misinformation and disinformation via user-generated content and propagandists*
4. *Increasingly emotionalized nature of online discourse*
5. *The growing number of people financially capitalising on algorithms used by social media platforms and internet search engines*

I will discuss the recent development and issues around fake news by keeping with Bakir and McStays (2017) five features of the digital media ecology.

1. *Financial decline of legacy news*

The first feature concerns the monetary loss by traditional news companies. The State of the News Media Report 2016 by PEW Research Center shows the budgetary crisis of traditional news companies. Employment figures declined 10% (2015 vs. 2014) and jobs kept being cut into 2016, at least 400 cuts were announced (Mitchell, Holcomb, Weisel, PEW 2016). Fewer journalists mean smaller newsrooms and less time for investigation. This is an ongoing concern for the quality of news production and the following awareness of this quality by the audience. The controversial technological development of robots

(Lobe 2015) writing simple articles could increase the economic pressure on journalists or relief them from routine work to focus more on investigative writing. These robots (already in use at the Associated Press) are based on algorithms and technical equipment. Cybercrime is already a critical issue as the "fake" Tweet about an explosion at the White House by AP in 2013 showed. The Twitter account was hacked and as a result, the Dow Jones decreased 145 points in the space of two minutes (Foster 2013). Consequently, digitalization has been a major topic within the media industry for a long time, but the digitalization of the work force will affect the valence of the journalist's profession, the journalist's self-concept, and the normative function of media for a democracy: Will journalists concentrate on verification of existing news in the future instead of providing latest information?

Another issue for established news companies is included in the first feature of the digital media ecology, it is the decrease in advertising. The PEW Research Center (Mitchell, Holcomb, Weisel 2016, p. 6) reported that "*the total digital ad spending grew another 20% in 2015 to about $60 billion, a higher growth rate than in 2013 and 2014. But journalism organizations have not been the primary beneficiaries. In fact, compared with a year ago, even more of the digital ad revenue pie – 65% – is swallowed up by just five tech companies. None of these are journalism organizations, though several – including Facebook, Google, Yahoo and Twitter – integrate news into their offerings.*" This loss of profit increases the economic pressure on news companies which in turn leads to reducing staff. Consequently, the established news media faces challenging competition from global players on two sides: advertising and content-creation.

2. *The news cycle's increasing immediacy*

The second feature of the digital media ecology which fuels the dissemination of fake news is the drive for immediacy (Bakir & McStay 2017). Due to economic pressure, a journalist as the traditional gate keeper can rarely afford time-consuming investigative journalism. "*For the last half century, gatekeeping theory has provided a solid framework for analyzing the selection and control of public news. To be a gatekeeper means to exercise control over what information reaches society and how social reality is framed*" (Wallace 2017,

p. 1). On the one hand journalists under pressure tend to use unchecked PR material (Jackson & Moloney 2016) which led to the negative term "churnal-ism" (Davies 2008). On the other hand, Wallace (2017) argues that phenom-ena such as the Arab Spring, WikiLeaks, and the Occupy Movement shows that gatekeeping tasks are no longer exclusive to journalists. Users as well as algorithms (as in Facebook or Google) are already new gatekeepers in the contemporary online news selection process. All this what will shape the self-concept of journalists and their duty to the public.

3. *Rapid circulation of misinformation and disinformation via user-gener-ated content and propagandists*

With the third feature, Bakir and McStay (2017, p. 6) discuss the increase of the systematic production and distribution of false information to manipulate public opinion as well as the dissemination of misinformation defined as "*inad-vertent online sharing of false information*" and the intended creation of false information (disinformation). The immediacy of social media, the possibility to communicate over different devices (smartphone, tablets, TV, watch, etc.) and the fact, that people are connected and embedded in social networks enables a rapid circulation of information in general. Besides the characteristics of so-cial media that support this fast dissemination, psychological, partly uncon-scious effects influence this circulation as well. The concepts of selective ex-posure and confirmation bias (see chapter 3.2) combined with the algorithms of Facebook and Google for example, lead to the popular effects of "echo chambers" and "filter bubbles". So, when people read news on social media, without checking whether this information is misleading or totally false, they will like it, comment on it or share it as long as the news fits their political views. Cook (2017, p.215) summarized the emergence of this phenomenon as fol-lows: "*Filter bubbles are further exacerbated by confirmation bias, which sug-gests that users may actively seek and use information that already coincides with existing mental schemas, as opposed to seeking information from a vari-ety of potentially conflicting sources.*" In addition, having in mind the "attention bias" hypothesis (chapter 3.5) Silverman (2015, p. 151) mentions a paper from 2012 (Lewandowsky, et al. 2012) where researchers found that stories that

evoke emotions are more readily and widely spread than neutral stories. *"Rumors and hoaxes often appeal to people's emotions, as well as their existing beliefs and fears* "(Silverman 2015, p. 151).

The working process and -standards of today`s online journalism itself are fueling the rapid circulation of mis/disinformation. Silverman (2015) created a US data base, to collected different news stories including rumors. Results of this database draws a very negative image of online media: *"Many of the trends and findings detailed in the paper reflect poorly on how online media behave. Journalists have always sought out emerging (and often unverified) news. They have always followed-on the reports of other news organizations. But today the bar for what is worth giving attention seems to be much lower"* (Silverman 2015, p. 2).

4. Increasingly emotionalized nature of online discourse

The fourth characteristics of the digital media ecology describes the increase of emotionalized language within the digital space. The discussion around hate comments in social media demonstrates how the digital space combined with anonymity leads to a loss of inhibitions. Bakir & McStay (2017) mention Suler's (2016 & 2004) "online inhibition effect" that might lead to a rude and over-emotional language.

In addition, fact-based arguments seem to no longer be the only way to negotiate issues. *"As we enter the post-trust era, in which facts and evidence have been replaced by personal belief and emotion, the nature of news, and what people accept as news, is also shifting towards a belief and emotion-based market. The truth of the story no longer matters. What matters is that the story falls in line with what a person wants to hear. "Fake news" no longer means factless or slanderous news, but rather news that is seen to attack a person's pre-existing beliefs. This is the truth of the post-truth era."* (Rochlin 2017, p. 3)

5. The growing number of people financially capitalizing on algorithms used by social media platforms and internet search engines

Clicks and views are the new performing indicators of the digital economy. Attention is the most desirable currency for further financial success. Clickbait-headlines fulfill this need for attention. Bakir and McStay (2017) argue that the mechanism of digital advertising on how to gain profit favors the production of fake news. Behavioral targeting techniques address the person and no longer the medium or publication. This new form of digital advertising led to examples where brands like Honda, Disney or Thomson Reuters popped up on websites which promoted Islamic State or neo-Nazi content (Bakir & McStay 2017, p. 14). In order to ensure brand safety, the digital advertising industry needs to increase engagement in identifying fake news publishers (Bakir & McStay 2017). Digital Campaign departments already work with blacklisting websites, but with the mounting rise of fake news websites, there will be an escalated need for a technical solution in the near future.

The intent of fake news is not only to gain clicks and views for economic reasons. Another harmful goal (intended or unintended) is to manipulate the public mood. For instance, fake news publishers from Macedonia created at least 140 US politics related websites to spread pro-Trump content via Facebook (Silverman & Alexander 2016). Although these Macedonians do not care about US politics they used attention grabbing headlines filled with false information to reinforce the beliefs and concerns of the American people, just to gain clicks. They unintentionally manipulate public opinion and mood and set the political and medial agenda. Bakir and McStay mention a Facebook study from 2014 (Kramer, Guillory & Hancock 2014, p. 8788) on emotional contagions where researchers optimized nearly 700 thousand people's news feeds. "*They found that when exposed to stimuli with positive or negative emotional content, people within social networks tend to replicate this in their own posting behavior* (…) which "*demonstrated the ability to calculate publics and algorithmically sort and manipulate online fellow-feeling*" (Bakir & McStay 2017, p. 16).

In conclusion, with all these different developments Bakir and McStay (2017, p. 17) argue "*that the commercial and political phenomenon of empathically optimized automated fake news is on the near horizon.*" The authors recommend that fighting against the economic reward of fake news is probably the best way to face this phenomenon, as the production of fake news is mainly

economically motivated. In the future, governments, advertisers, media institutions and analytics companies need to work together to prevent information wars instigated by political actors (Bakir & McStay 2017).

2.7   Conclusion and Hypothesis

To recapitulate the theoretical background and state of the art research regarding the trust in the media, there are four major developments that affect this trust:

- Change in the way journalists produce news articles under the pressure of economic survival and the use of social media as a source
- Populist politicians, who try to frame the media's public image by challenging its credibility
- Patterns of human behavior which influence the way we consume and explore news like avoiding cognitive dissonance
- The emergence of news articles with false or strongly biased (political) information – whether motivated by economic (clickbait) or political reasons ("alternative facts")

These developments might be critical in further escalating the decrease of trust in the media. Trust and credibility are requirements to transmit information for decision-making. The change in the production of news and journalist's practice regarding digitalization generates a big challenge for the media industry in redefining its self-concept, profession, and therefore journalistic quality-standards.

Research has already found several reasons for why people do not trust the media, but none of the examined studies discusses the influence of politicians and their rhetoric ("Fake News") on the media's reputation and image. Reputation and image are constitutive for credibility and credibility emerges from people's trust. Reading Trump's tweets distinctly reveals the "war on the media" he is leading. Therefore, I found myself asking what effect does it have on the way people talk or write about the media when a prominent politician constantly repeats the "fake news" frame?

David Uberti (2016), a journalist for the Columbia Journalism Review con-cludes in regard to this new "fake news" framing of the established media that: *"Just as the media has employed "fake news" to discredit competitors for public attention, political celebrities and partisan publications have used it to discredit the press wholesale. As hard as it is to admit, that's an increasingly unfair fight."*

During his first press conference as the President of the United States, Donald Trump used the term "fake news" numerous times. He specifically directed it at the established news media, f.ex., CNN, MSNBC, and The New York Times. These news outlets had not supported Donald Trump during the election. Therefore, Trump started a well-known populist communication strategy: a conspiracy, that this "fake news media" is the enemy of the American people (see figure 2). He charged the term "fake news" with a new narrative ("the manipulating well-established news media") and the recent rise of "real" fake news supports this narrative. In addition, Trump uses Twitter as his main com-munication channel to speak directly to the audience, without a "gate-keeping" journalist.

Within this thesis, I will focus on this suspense-packed interaction between the media and politicians in a particular public, namely Twitter. After all, Twitter is Donald Trump's favorite channel of communication.

The variable I want to examine is not the trust itself, but the reputation as a theoretical sum of trust and credibility. I will define reputation as, how people (Twitter accounts) address (@mentions) and talk about the news media (#fake news, fake media, fake…). The main question is: *Does Donald Trump's fram-ing against the media affects the news media's reputation in the Twitter sphere?*

<u>HYPOTHESIS</u>

If Donald Trump uses the term "fake news" in his tweets the number of Twitter users applying this term in direct conversation (f.ex: @CNN) with news media organizations increases on Twitter.

<u>Null hypothesis:</u> *If Donald Trump does not use this term in his tweets, fewer Twitter users generate tweets containing this term in direct conversation with news media organizations on Twitter.*

Independent variable: tweets by Donald Trump including the term "fake news"

Dependent variable: number of tweets by users directed at news media Twitter accounts including the term "fake news"

Further details on definition, research process, and objects of investigation are presented in chapter 3.3.

3. Mining Twitter – Research Object & Method

3.1 The Digital Society and Digital Methods

Digital technologies are everywhere. We track our fitness, we share our music online, we communicate over Facebook and What`s App. We "google" information and Wikipedia is the biggest online collaborative library in the world. Smart devices relate to the internet and help us to optimize our behavior. "The Quantified Self" has already become a mainstream movement, where technology provides self-knowledge through self-tracking (Wikipedia 2017b).

We now live in a digital society and interactions with digital technologies tell us about the social world (Lupton 2015). By using these digital technologies, a massive amount of data is generated, and new tools are invented to cope with this mass of data. These developments are summarized under the term "Big Data". Especially digital communication data of social media platforms provide a big field for communication research: "*Big Data also include user-generated content, or information that has been intentionally uploaded to social media platforms by users as part of their participation in these sites: their tweets, status updates, blog posts and comments, photographs and videos and so on. Social media platforms record and monitor an increasing number of features about these communicative acts: not only what is said, but the profiles of the speaker and the audience, how others reacted to the content; how many likes, comments, views, time spent on a page or retweets were generated, the time*

of day interaction occurred, the geographical location of user, the search terms used to find the content, how content is shared across platforms and so on" (Lupton 2015, p. 3).

Citizens, media organizations, journalists and politicians are online, interactive, and connected with each other. For example, the social media platform "Twitter" creates a direct connection to an organization and/or to a specific journalist as well as to politicians and celebrities. At Twitter, communications occur within seconds what consequently provides a real-time experience in terms of reporting and reading news. As social media platforms are a new way of creating social networks, the scientific community spotlights these social networks by their power of shaping social live. "*Contemporary social theory has increasingly represented societies in the developed world as characterized by networks, across which information circulates and spreads*" (Lupton 2015, p.3). Within social networks the way of how information is circulating is an important question of communications science, as it raises questions about publics, opinion formation and information flow.

Therefore, analyses concerning subjects, content and structure of digital social communication and the amount of data that is generated led to a new set of "digital methods". Schumann et al. (2015, p.11) define digital methods, as methods were researches look at web-dynamics to explain phenomena in society. The authors refer to Richard Rogers's (2013) pleading of a new area of internet research, where the divide between the virtual and real is no longer a matter of concern. Rogers (2013) mentions a study by a Dutch newspaper, where they analyzed sentiments in the Internet Archive over time to identify an increase in extremist language of right wing groups. This is a good example of a new internet research that is explaining cultural change: "*The internet is employed as a site of research for far more than just online culture. The issue no longer is how much of society and culture is online, but rather how to diagnose cultural change and societal conditions by means of the Internet. The conceptual point of departure is the recognition that the Internet is not only an object but also a source*" (Rogers 2013, p.24).

In addition, Rogers (2013, p.37) wants to strive towards a discussion about limitations of current methods and not the limitations of the digital sphere by

asking how much society is online. Schumann et al. (2015) also see tremendous challenge for digital methods in communication science. Compared to traditional mass communication, within digital network communication platforms as Facebook or Twitter, roles of players are changing, content changes within minutes and algorithms define whom and what we notice. Diversity and timing of communication increased enormously.

There are three main problems of digital methods and the investigation of society:

First, the amount of unstructured data like content needs to be structured and categorized. Sentiment analysis of Facebook comments is an example of categorization. As the amount of data is no longer manageable by a scientist on its own, program needs to do this. Researchers need to adopt new skills in programming and using software to make sense out of this mass on data (Schumann 2015).

Second, the individualization of information by algorithms that are intellectual property of big digital players as Google, Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, etc. are kind of a "black box" but algorithms play a significant importance in shaping social and economic life (Kitchin 2017).

And third, the problem of accessing (social) data. Personal Facebook profiles and profile information is privacy restricted and therefore research is mainly focusing conversation on public Facebook pages. The entire information is only accessibly for Facebook itself, what reflects the business model of this company. For Twitter data, source limitations are for example that historic tweets are not available for free (see chapter 3.4 where I mention some of the limitations with Twitter data in detail). Rate limitations like 15 requests per 15 minutes expands the time of data gathering. Additionally, researchers can never be sure if they get all Tweets they want to analyze.

Therefore, questions of the explanatory power of random "Big Data samples" for inferential statistics remain open (Mahrt 2015). The Twitter search website for example shows only Tweets with a specific relevance. This rule of relevance is influenced of the completeness of profile information and the level of activity (Twitter 2017b).

At least Twitter data is open for research concerning (actual) content/tweets and accounts/Users. Twitter offers a good playground for digital methods to analyze an enormous amount of various data. It provides more data access than Facebook and therefore more already standardized methods for analyzing digital communication. Additionally, Twitter is an important news information platform and a tool for expressing opinions on different topics in the USA. Weller et al. (2014) argue that Twitter is worth studying because this communications tool is a global phenomenon, already embedded in our media ecology and integrated in our daily life. Twitter influences with whom we talk about what and with whom we want to get connected for a specific reason. Examining the so-called electronic word of mouth (eWoM), where customers talk about a product, or company has gained a lot of importance in reputation management, as those statements are visible for many people on the Internet (Jin & Phua 2014, Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004). Consequently, investigating negative talk at Twitter against a media company and who or what is influencing these negative user statements is an important analysis for building up strategies to enhance reputation and credibility, what leads to customer`s trust in an organization and product.

In the following chapter I`m going to describe the social media platform itself regarding usage and characteristics. Especially in the U.S.A, Twitter gained high popularity in broadcasting and consuming news.

3.2 Twitter and It`s Network

Twitter itself is a microblogging service where people communicate with 140-character messages what enables quick and easy communication and is structured as a network. Twitter is a big social network with more than 310 million
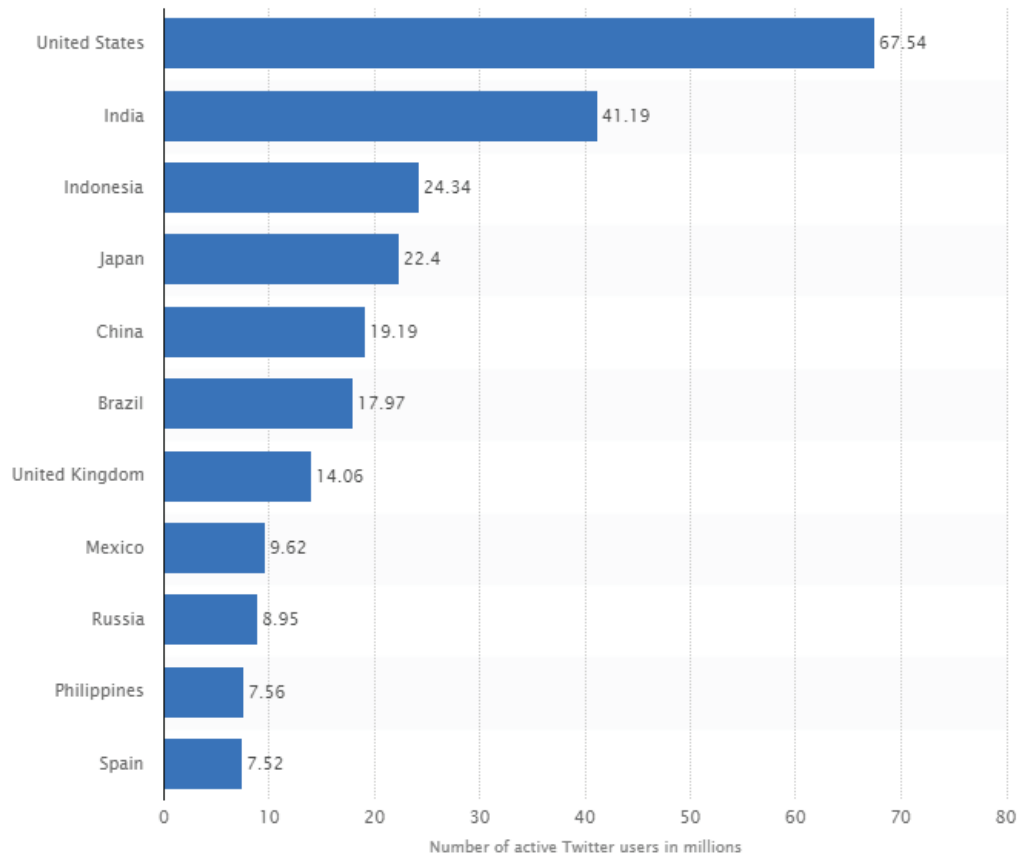
Figure 16: US shows the highest numbers of active accounts. Note: *From Number of active Twitter users in leading markets as of May 2016 (in millions)* (statista 2016).

monthly active users worldwide as of the first quarter of 2016. According to the statistic portal "statista" in Q4 2016, the number of monthly active U.S. Twitter users reaches 67 million. Compared to other countries, Twitter in the US has a high popularity.

In 2015, the PEW Research Center conducted a national survey of 1,520 adults to get some socio-demographics for social media. Around 23% of Americans use Twitter but Facebook with 79% of online adults is still the biggest social media platform. Twitter user are mostly younger and also have a higher education level. Twitter is more or less an urban communication medium. The American Press Institute and Twitter, in collaboration with research company DB5, did a study (Rosenstiel et al. 2015) in 2015 that examines the relationship between news use and Twitter. 74% of Twitter User, use Twitter for getting news and 40% want to be alerted with breaking news. 73% of Twitter news users,

Twitter Demographics
Among internet users, the % who use Twitter

	Internet users
Total	23%
Men	25
Women	21
White, Non-Hispanic	20
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=85)	28
Hispanic	28
18-29	32
30-49	29
50-64	13
65+	6
High school grad or less	19
Some college	23
College+	27
Less than $30,000/yr	21
$30,000-$49,999	19
$50,000-$74,999	25
$75,000+	26
Urban	30
Suburban	21
Rural	15

Source: Pew Research Center, March 17-April 12, 2015.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 17: Twitter Demographics. PEW Research Center. March–April 2016. Note: *From Social Media Update 2016* (PEW 2016)
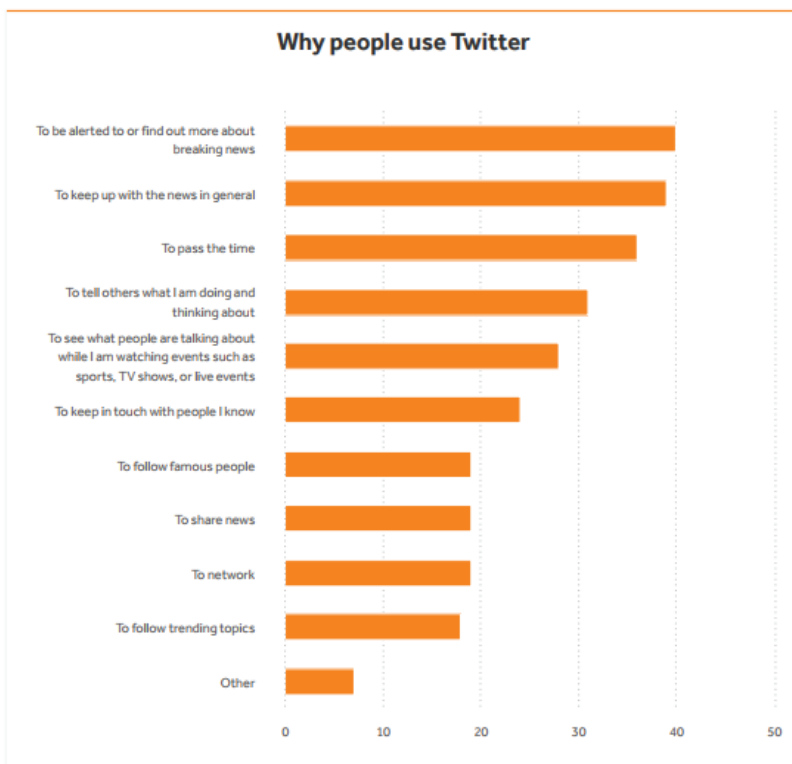
follow individual writers, journalists or commentators. A majority (62%), also said they follow main brand accounts of news organizations. In summary, news companies as well as journalists play a significant role in news exposure on Twitter.

Another very interesting result is that 94% of Twitter news user get their news from scrolling their timelines or look through

Figure 18: Why people use Twitter. Results of a survey between Nov. 23 and Dec. 15, 2014. Note: From *Twitter and the News: How people use the social network to learn about the world*. (Rosenstiel et al. 2015)

tweets of people they follow. So, what kind of news and information a Twitter user is exposed to is mainly shaped by their decision whom and what to follow. The possibility of creating an individual news agenda and discussion sphere relates to the selective exposure theory (mentioned in chapter 2.2) and the recent conversation about filter bubbles and echo chambers.

Axel Bruns (2014, p.30) summarized Twitter's benefit for users as follows: Twitter is used as "*a source of real-time information and a place for debate in news, politics, business, and entertainment. (…) Rather, the highly personal use by each user as a tool for outreach, spreading information, or connecting to friends is at the very heart of Twitter's utility for individuals and organizations alike, and indeed underpins its very success as a platform for global news media and public communication.*"

Consequently, Twitter also has a high potential for offering a deliberative space where politicians and civil society negotiate issues and opinions about social living. An analysis of The Digital Policy Council (The Digital Policy council 2015) in 2015 shows that 83% of world leaders are active on Twitter: "*A total of 139 world leaders out of 167 countries had accounts on Twitter set up in their personal name or through an official government office (…)*". This supports the idea of having a new public square, where political discussions and debates are carried out.

According to Maireder and Schlögel (2015) the theoretical background for discussing this specific communication platform is based on Habermas`s normative concept of public: Public as a very complex network of different communication spheres differentiated by geography, culture, issues and interests. These communication spheres can be distinguished along their function and content. By using Twitter people speak out opinions (function) on specific topics (content), while politicians for example use this communication channel as well for personalization strategies (function) and to set the political agenda within this communication sphere (content).

In this thesis publics are defined along Maireder`s and Schlögel`s definition as relation of communication among people (or actors) around relevant issues. Publics furthermore are described as aggregations of communication. There is a difference between a heterogenic mass where people do not need to have

anything in common and publics where participants are more or less homogenic in sharing the same issues (Maireder & Schlögl 2015, p.117). Research shows (Himbelboim et al. 2013, 2014) that examining Twitter debates by using social network analysis uncovers people's tendency to follow or mainly talk to people who are supporting one`s attitude. This already discussed selective exposure to content results in confirmation bias, filter bubbles and echo chambers. It undermines the idea of Twitter being a deliberative space where different and challenging ideas are negotiated. Colleoni et al. (2014, p. 320) argue referring to Kwak et al. (2010) that Twitter can be both: a "*symmetric social graph*" and a "*nonsymmetrical interest graph*" – consequently Twitter "*theoretically is conducive to both the public sphere and the echo chamber scenario*".

Twitter is a rich source of information and worth analyzing to investigate effects like selective exposure or public deliberation as the exposure to information is influenced by the network and the network is defined by the subject and the content. Twitter communication creates different networks by replying to and mentioning other users within their tweets as well as the principle of following people or organizations to gain information from these sources. Depending on the subject/issue and accounts of involved people that are discussing, different network structures are created and visible. The analysis of social network in general looks at relationships between different objects or subjects. The structure of relationships provides answers to a specific behavior or condition and the other way around. Twitter data provides insights in the way how communication and its content shapes social behavior in forming relationships and the other way around. Additionally, research of user`s tweets on specific topics provide insights on influences of other users on their reaction or probably as well as influences of discussions in offline public (f.ex: #blacklivesmatter).

Regarding the use of "Big Data" methods, Twitter provides a good example to use different tools along the research process of data- gathering, processing and analysis.

3.3 Research Process – Operationalization & Hypothesis

Twitter itself is a rich source of social data as compared to Facebook, Twitter account are mostly open for public and provides a well- documented API (Twitter 2017a) and many other open-source analyzing tools. Hashtags, follower and mentions mechanism link users in many ways so that networks around a specific topic are created in near real-time and at an international level (Russell 2013). By using different metrics, it is possible to analyze the social network behind this microblogging service.

Figure 19 shows what kind of features one Tweet includes at least and how rich of different objects of investigations are included in one tweet.

Figure 19: Twitter entities. Own illustration.

A great advantage of using Twitter data is its open network structure with non-reciprocal following and public profiles by default. Further, Twitter provides various APIs (application programming interface) for reading and writing Twitter data. Therefore, gathering data for research is much easier and only requires authorization (OAuth). Responses are in JSON, an easy understandable data format especially for people with no programming skills.

As there are many different Twitter entities to investigate, clarification a long what content and subjects of communication is needed. Therefore, the research process is split in the following steps:

1. **Identify what kind of data is needed** to provide insights and answers to the theoretical research questions and hypotheses? What are the important subjects of investigation?
2. **Collect data and check data quality:** what kind of data do I get? What difficulties concerning data gathering will occur? What work-arounds are helpful?
3. **Analyzing the data:** define variables and conduct appropriate methods to test hypotheses and research questions
4. **Results** -> chapter 3.4

STEP 1: Identification of relevant data

To identify the needed data, it is important to understand the different communication possibilities at Twitter and thus the many ways of studying Twitter data.

Maireder et al. (2017) discuss different research of Twitter networks and refers to several studies. Many scholars have studied the results of constructed networks around the diffusion of specific tweets by looking at retweet networks (Bruns, Highfield, & Burgess 2013; Conover et al. 2011; Starbird & Palen, 2012 cited in Maireder et al. 2017). Further, researchers can examine @reply-networks to uncover patterns of references among accounts within a specific topic/discussion, or analyze the information diffusion and exposure of #hashtags (Romero et al 2011, Xu, Sang, Blasiola & Park 2014 cited in Maireder et al. 2017). Finally, studying Twitter networks, the connections among accounts tell us something about the social graph (Maireder et al. 2017, p. 128) or the interest graph, if research is focusing non-reciprocated networks. According to Maireder and Schlögl (2015) I presume that by choosing followees (= Twitter accounts that are followed by others, in Twitter terminology named "friends") users have a specific interest in receiving news/statements from this account. Consequently, the friends network structure of twitter shows constellations of interests what further due to different interests constructs homogeneous groups.

Defining Twitter as a network on a macro-level Twitter accounts are nodes and their relationship to others are edges. If one account follows another one a

relationship is established what influences a user's news feed on Twitter. The more similar followers and followees (friends) two users have, the stronger is the relationship and the nearer they are in the network. They get the same information and talk about the same topics at Twitter (Maireder & Schlögl 2015).

Axel Bruns and Hallvard Moe (2014, p. 16-20) introduced a structural layered model of communication on Twitter that is linked to the specific technological possibilities of Twitter as a platform. The following figure shows the three main layers as conceptual starting point for Twitter research:
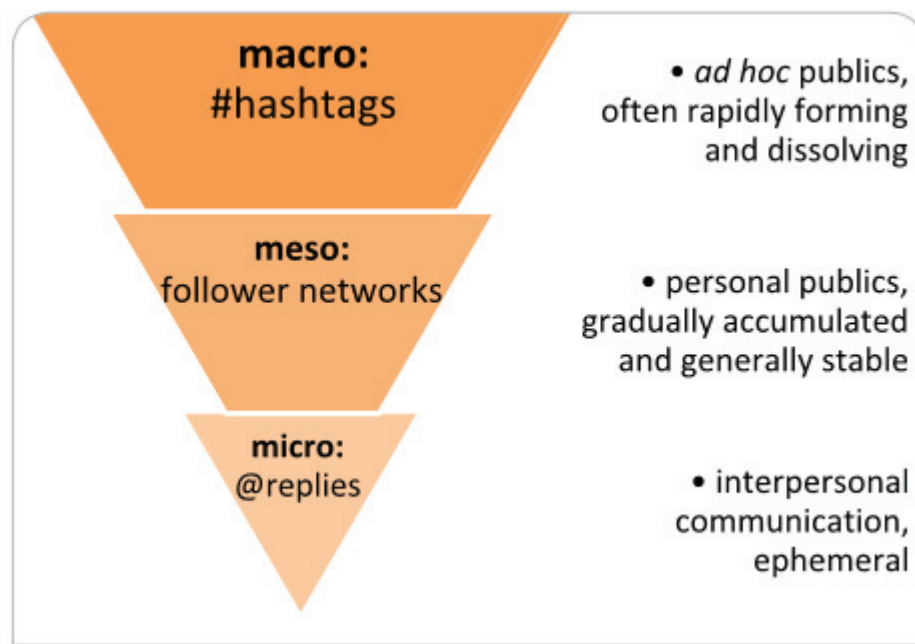
Figure 20: Layered model of communicative spaces on twitter. Note: *From Twitter and Society* (Bruns, Hallvard & Moe 2014, p. 20)

The MESO-level includes follower and followee (friends) networks. Those networks determine the information flow between people and groups. In contrast to Facebook, Twitter follower-networks are not reciprocal. A user can follow an account without requiring the other user to follow back. By using Twitter, one can create its "personal public" (Schmidt 2014, p 4. cited in Bruns 2014). Additionally, a Twitter user whom you follow shapes your timeline and the information you are (advertent or inadvertent) exposed to. User who are connected through an account they follow, can be regarded as having the same interest: like following a musician's or politician's account.

The MACRO-level describes the hashtag used to relate a tweet to a specific topic and to go beyond a user's "personal public". Hashtags do have the potential to reach people without the need for having a connection. Hashtags are nowadays omnipresent in the online and offline world, thinking about the use at Instagram and Facebook to describe f. ex. mood as well as, advertisements on TV or printed ones in newspapers – aiming to bring the product discussion into the digital space. But hashtags also help to exchange information and to mobilize a dispersed audience like during the Arab spring, the #blacklivesmatter movement or #unibrennt in Vienna. To sum up "*hashtag takes communication on Twitter from the meso to the macro layer*" (Bruns & Moe 2014, p. 19).

On the MICRO- level @reply- conversations like including the username preceded by the @ within a tweet make it possible to address a specific tweet to that mentioned user without a follower-followee (friends) connection. "(...) *@mentions and @replies clearly indicate an underlying intention to specifically address one or more other Twitter users, over the total number of the sender's followers*" (Bruns & Moe 2014, p. 19). In contrast to @reply conversations, @mentions do not compulsory mean that the user intends a conversation (f.ex: "I like @DonaldTrump") and it`s not always clear whether users use @mentions only for references or for direct conversations.

Bruns & Moe (2014, p. 21) stated that these different layers are not isolated from another, for example: "*an @reply response to a hashtagged tweet transitions the conversation, without a need for the conversation partners to follow one another at the meso level, directly from the broader public space of the hashtag to the one-on-one exchange of @mentions (especially if the @reply does not itself contain the hashtag, and is therefore visible in the first place only to sender and recipient, and any shared followers).*" This transition between the different layers goes the other way around as well if using a hashtag in direct conversation (@reply) makes the tweet available for people who are searching for a specific hashtag. Retweeting a specific tweet also is a mechanism to jump across the layers. "*Twitter users habitually use them to bring messages from the hashtag level to the attention of their own followers*" (Bruns & Moe 2014, p. 22). If you use the button "retweet", a user can write a comment including @mentions and #hashtags above the verbatim tweet of the user you would like to quote.

According to Bruns & Moe (2014) many research is focused on the macro level (#hashtags) as it provides a public sphere of people who engage to the same topic. But analyzing hashtags does not provide the full range of how Twitter user think about or respond to a specific topic: non- hashtagged @replies or @mentions of hashtagged tweets as well as conversation about a given issue without a hashtag will not be considered in #hashtag research.

Therefore, I decided to concentrate on the MICRO layer within my research for a better understanding of the "fake news" discussion against news media.

So first, to understand the Trump's influence on the negative talk against news media I need all tweets of Trump. The analysis of these tweets gives information about

- when the "fake news" framing by Trump has started and
- what kind of news media he is mentioning concurrent with the term "fake news"

Second, I need all tweets of users containing the same combination of the term "fake news" and mentioned news media companies, to examine if the volume of those tweets increased.

The term "Fake news" **AND** @mention **OR** @reply at news media companies

STEP 2: **Collect data and check data quality**

There are some limitations using the Twitter API. First, you must include your credentials in the request because those functions require authentication. Second the API only allows you to gather tweets published in the past 7 days (Twitter 2017a). Consequently, you can`t get historic Twitter data concerning a specific time or historic topic. Historic data is only available via GNIP, Twitter's enterprise platform (GNIP 2017) and demands dependent from the amount of data a lot of money. So, I needed to rethink the data collection and try to reduce the number of days for data collection by examining important key events, or time frames of the "fake news" conversation.

I found a good workaround, to access historic Twitter data for free by using a JavaScript from the editor of the Donald Trump Twitter Archive (Trump Twitter

Archive 2017). This archive is collecting all Tweets of Donald Trump by accessing the Twitter Search Website (Twitter Advanced Search 2017). The creator of this archive made his JavaScript available for everybody. By using this script, I can collect all relevant Tweets in a specific time from Donald Trump's account. I used this script via a webrowser (google chrome). This script causes automatic scrolling of the Twitter Search Website and stores these results as a JSON File in the clipboard. Afterwards I converted those results in a CSV/Excel Sheet by using an online tool (Data Design Group 2017).

I decided to collect all Donald Trump tweets from 2015 to end of June 2017 as this is covering Trump`s journey from a wealthy business leader to the presidential candidacy (16th of June 2015) and finally the inauguration as President of the USA (20th of January 2017). The first request was grouped in quarters (Q1 2015-Q2 2017) to avoid overloading the browser. The smaller the time frame for the request, the better the browser workload. The script and introduction from the owner of the Twitter Archive is attached in the appendix of this paper.

To check data quality of this workaround I collected the same needed data three times. Unfortunately, the number of tweets during this timeframe always varied. My reference source was the Twitter Archive website, as there is an hourly update of the request and the tweets are stored, which is a good indicator that Tweets at this website are almost complete, including Tweets that got deleted in the past.

The data quality check for Donald Trump tweets shows the following result:

Table 1: No of Trump tweets form Q1 2015 to Q2 2017 distinguished among different dates of requests and compared to reference source.

	day of request			reference source
	05.Jul.17	14.Jul.17	30.Sep.17	Twitter Archive
No. of tweets	12,416	12,418	12,460	12,524
Share based on reference source	99,14%	99,15%	99,49%	100%

There are several reasons for this discrepancy like browser overloading, slow broadband or Twitter itself is highly frequented at the same moment of the data request, but I couldn't figure it out, what exactly made the difference. As the

last request reaches around 99,5% of the reference source, I decided to use the latest data set (September 2017) for analyzing Trump`s Tweets.

The data quality check of this workaround for collecting users who are using the combination of "fake news" and defined news media accounts shows bad results.

Table 2: No of user tweets containing "fake news" and media organizations Tump has already mentioned in his tweets.

	day of request		reference source
No. of tweets	12.Jul.17	04.Okt.17	GNIP request
december 2016	1,916	11,904	n.a
january 2017	12,019	22,003	app. 500,000
february 2017	18,656	28,472	app. 1,000,000
march 2017	12,283	19,540	n.a

Note: Reference source is the GNIP request per e-mail (see appendix).

In summary, this workaround is not useful for an enormous amount of data. There are several reasons why the results show such a significant difference. One could be that "*Twitter Accounts search surfaces results with preference to those users who have a complete name, username, and bio on their profile*". Additionally*, "it's important to Tweet, Retweet, and mention regularly to gain resonance amongst your followers so that search results are up to date for your account"* (Twitter 2017b).

To check the data set, I requested the same search rules from GNIP, a Twitter company selling historical Twitter data. Unfortunately, a data set starts at $1,250 and my entire request for January and February 2017 would have cost $ 2,500. Consequently, I decided to work with the data I collected through the workaround, as the GNIP request shows an increase of tweets as well regarding the "fake news" accusation from January to February compared to the workaround data. My underlying assumption concerning the collected data is, that I just have a small extract of those tweets, that are from "relevant" Twitter user (see Twitter statement above).

Table 3: No of users who tweeted "fake news" in combination with the defined media organizations.

time	No of unique users
FY 2015	122
FY 2016	10,247
01/2017	13,522
02/2017	17,417
03/2017	11,901

STEP 3: Analyzing the data

After the data collection and data quality checks I am going to analyze the data, along the hypothesis.

Hypothesis: *If Donald Trump uses the term "fake news" in his tweets the number of Twitter users applying this term in direct conversation (f.ex: @CNN) with news media organizations increases on Twitter.*

Null hypothesis: *If Donald Trump does not use this term in his tweets, fewer Twitter users generate tweets containing this term in direct conversation with news media organizations on Twitter.*

Independent variable: tweets by Donald Trump including the term "fake news"

Dependent variable: number of tweets by users directed at news media Twitter accounts including the term "fake news"

Period of the investigation:

The full years 2015 & 2016, first three months of 2017 of Donald Trump tweets. The chosen period allows me to see the evolution of the term in Trump tweets by identifying "fake news" rich and poor months.

Objects of investigations:

1. (Number of) Tweets by Donald Trump including the term "fake news"
2. Identification of news media`s Twitter accounts that are accused by Trump of being "fake news".

3. (Number of) Twitter users who uses the term "fake news" in direct conversations or replies to the following news media organizations Trump accused of being "fake news" most.

Before testing the hypotheses, I conduct a preliminary analysis, to define the **period and objects of investigation** concerning the hypothesis.

I collected 12,460 tweets of Donald Trump during 2015 and the 2nd quarter of 2016. Interestingly, the number of tweets by Trump went down since his presidential candidacy (16th of June 2015) - the inauguration as President of the USA (20th of January 2017) - and June 2017.
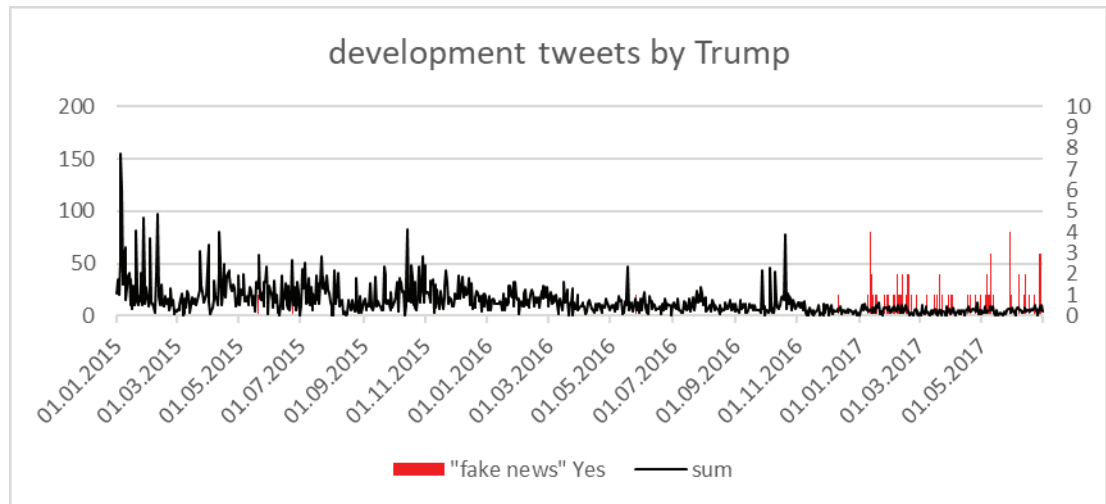
Figure 21: No. of tweets from Donald Trump from Q1 2015 to Q2 2017. Tweets including the term "fake news" are presented on red.

In sum, Trump uses 76 times the term "fake news" in the given period. Trump used the #fakenews hashtag 5 times, to connect to a broader public (macro level) –once in January 11th, 3 times in March and 1 time in June 2017.

75 of the "fake news" tweets took place in 2017 and 32 of Trump's tweets including the term "fake news" were in January and February 2017.
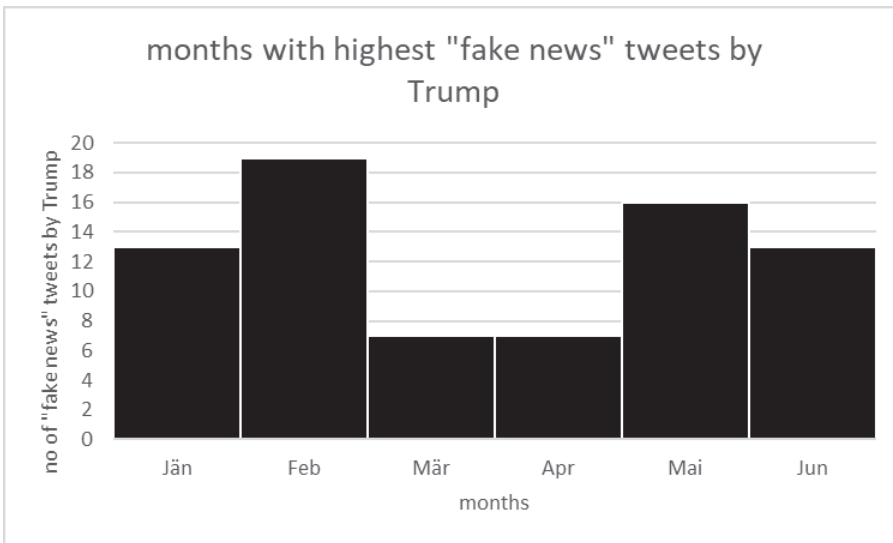
Figure 22: No. of "fake news" tweets from Donald Trump

On January 11th after the first news conference of Trump as a president, he broadcasted 4 tweets with around 350,000 favorites, 104,000 retweets and 163,000 replies on average. During his first news press conference on TV, Trump used the term "fake news" 7 times. At his second news conference in February 16th, 2017 he used the terms "fake news", "fake reporting" or "fake stories" 20 times. This increase in the "fake news" narrative by Trump is represented at Twitter as well. In January every fourth and in February every second day Donald Trump tweeted about "fake news".
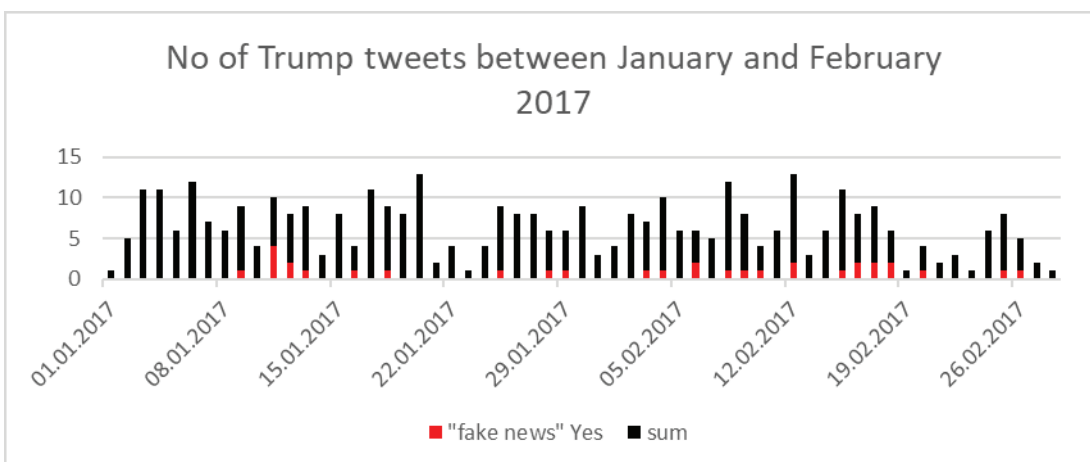
Figure 23: No. of tweets from Donald Trump from Q1 2015 to Q2 2017. Tweets including the term "fake news" are presented on red.

76

The first press conference started at 11 A.M and lasts around one hour. Trump tweeted already at 2:19 A.M the following statement: "FAKE NEWS - A TOTAL POLITICAL WITCH HUNT!" (Trump 2017c) as a reaction to the article of BuzzFeed on January 10th, 2017 about Trump's relationships to Russia (Bensinger et al. 2017). The following tweet of Trump on the same day

Figure 24: Trump tweet before his first news press conference, (Trump 2017a)

contains the first hashtag #fakenews (see figure 26).

But BuzzFeed was not the only media that got attacked by Trump. The public accusation of CNN being fake news started during the news press conference, where Trump rejected CNN's reporter request to answer: "*Go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead. No, not you. Not you. Your organization is terrible. Your organization is terrible. Let's go. Go ahead. Quiet. Quiet. She's asking a question. Don't be rude. Don't be rude. Don't be rude. No, I'm not going to give you a question. I'm not going to give you a question. You are fake news. Go ahead. Go ahead"* (The New York Times 2017a).

At Twitter he mentioned CNN most frequently in combination with the term "fake news", followed by The New York Times – both news media were the main campaign news source for Clinton voters (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel & Shearer, 2016).

Table 4: News media mentioned in tweets Table, including the term "fake media"

media outlets	No of mentions by Trump tweets	in relation with term fake news/media
ABC	91	6
CBS	59	3
CNN	351	14
MSM	24	2
MSNBC	14	1
NBC	439	8
nytimes	107	9
washingtonpost	47	2
fox news	758	4

On the contrary to CNN, Trump promoted positively the Fox News Twitter account a lot in his tweets- even in combination with the term fake news. But the meaning of the content is totally different (see table 6.)

Table 5: Examples of Trump tweets containing the term "fake news" and news media companies

Tweets fake news & fox
Congratulations to @FoxNews for being number one in inauguration ratings. They were many times higher than FAKE NEWS @CNN - public is smart!
The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred. @MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great!
Just heard Fake News CNN is doing polls again despite the fact that their election polls were a WAY OFF disaster. Much higher ratings at Fox
Why doesn't Fake News talk about Podesta ties to Russia as covered by @FoxNews or money from Russia to Clinton - sale of Uranium?

Tweets fake news & other news media (excerpt)
So they caught Fake News CNN cold, but what about NBC, CBS & ABC? What about the failing @nytimes & @washingtonpost? They are all Fake News!
The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!
The #FakeNews MSM doesn't report the great economic news since Election Day. #DOW up 16%. #NASDAQ up 19.5%. Drilling & energy sector...
The failing @nytimes has been wrong about me from the very beginning. Said I would lose the primaries, then the general election. FAKE NEWS!

While Trump mentioned news media like CNN and New York Times in a negative way concerning the term "fake news", Trump highlighted Fox News as the better news media. Consequently, I exclude Fox News from my analysis.

In summary, those figures show that Trump is questioning parts of established media institutions by framing their credibility by using the term "fake news" – in public and in the Twitter sphere. Additionally, regarding Trumps first press conference, one can observe his increasing influence on media`s "*deep grammar*" (Rosen 2017) by rejecting journalists 'questions. The effects on the audience, within this thesis, the Twitter audience, of these populist strategies are not fully understood. Therefore I`d like to examine the correlation between Trump's use of the "fake news" term and the reaction of Twitter users towards news media organizations at Twitter.

I defined the relevant **period of investigation** based on Trump's "fake news" tweets. January and February where the most intensive "fake news" tweet months of Trump. To examine, whether Trump plays a significant role in the increase of the "fake news" accusation by users, I collected user tweet data from 2015 until March 2017. For testing the hypothesis, I will use data from December to March, to include "fake news" poor months (December and March) in relation to "fake news" rich months (January and February). The **objects of investigations** are those media Twitter accounts, Trump mentioned most in combination with the term "fake news" in a negative way (see table 5, excluding Fox News).

The following figure shows the evolution of user's direct conversation with those news media channels in combination with the term "fake news", Trump mentioned in his tweets. Especially around the first (11th January) and second press conference (16th February), numbers of user tweets increased. Slightly after the announcement of Trumps victory on 8th November 2016, tweets of users increased but Trump had not yet tweeted anything related to fake news.
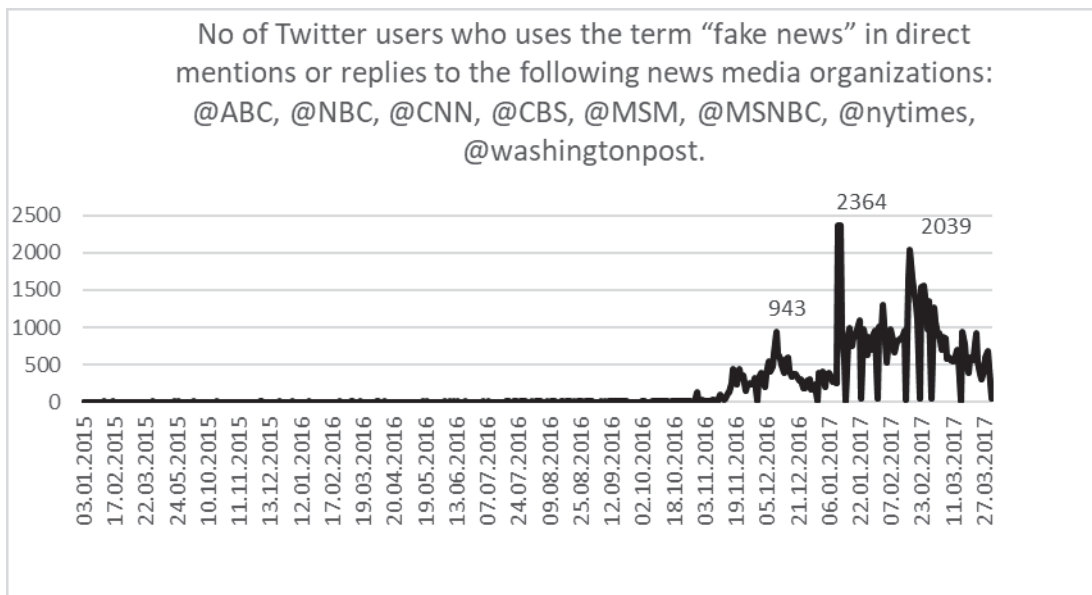
Figure 25: No of Twitter user who tweeted the term "fake news" & mentioned one of the defined news media accounts

The direct accusations by users shows their highest increase around Trump's press conferences in January and February 2017. This is an indicator that Trump influenced the Twitter "fake news" debate and probably encouraged users to discredit established media accounts in direct conversation on Twitter.

To test the hypothesis, I will conduct a point-biserial correlation calculation. The collected data consists of a nominal dichotomous variable (Trump did a "fake news" tweet: yes or no) and a continuous variable (number of user tweets). Therefore, to determine the strength of a linear relationship between one continuous variable and one nominal variable I use the point-biserial correlation coefficient. Its value can range from -1 to +1.

The point-biserial correlation has six assumptions that need to be considered (Laerd Statistics 2017):

#1: a continuous dependent variable

#2 the independent variable is dichotomous

#3 the two variables should be paired.

#4 no significant outliers

#5 the variance is equal in each group of the dichotomous variable (homogeneity of variances)

#6 the continuous variable should be approximately normally distributed for each group of the dichotomous variable

To have a first visual examination of a possible correlation, I plot the number of user Tweets per day in relation to these days when Trump`s tweets contained the "fake news" term and days without a "fake news" tweet by Trump.
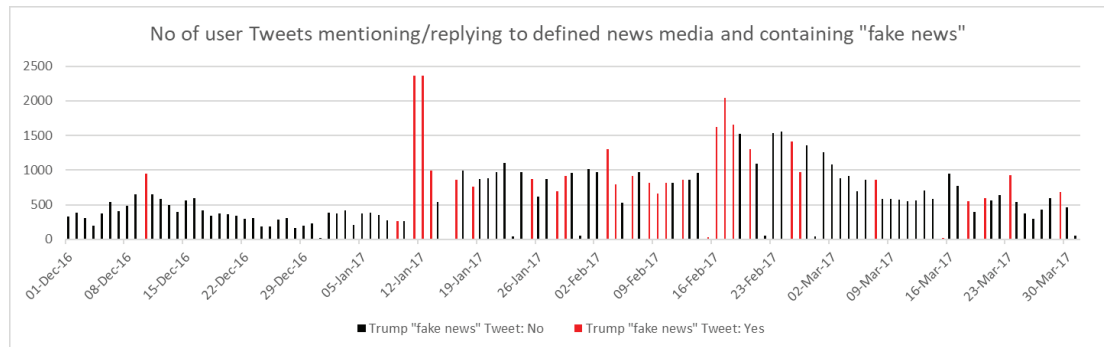
Figure 26: No. of user tweets per day classified by if Trump had a "fake news" tweet during this day. December 2016- March 2017

The figure shows that around the 11th and 12th of January, and the 16th, 17th, and 18th of February, the number of users, using the term "fake news" against CNN, NYT, etc. increased. On 11th of January and the 16th of February 2017, Trump held these memorable press conferences, already mentioned before. There might be a slight correlation, as the red bars (= number of user tweets including "fake news" directed at specific news media on days where Trump tweeted about "fake news) are most of the time higher than the black bars (Trump had not used the term "fake news"). To calculate the correlation, I first need to examine if the data fulfils the assumptions for a point-biserial correlation.

Assumptions #1 to #3 for calculating a point –biserial correlation are fulfilled due to the study design. To test whether assumption #4 to #6 will be fulfilled, I need to explore the data set by the statistic software SPSS (version 24). Firstly, I examine the dataset regarding number of outliers by applying a boxplot. Unfortunately, in the first run the data set includes two outliers. These are the days around 11th and 12th January, where Trump held his first press conference and user tweets concerning "fake news" directed at news media accounts were very high. This comparatively high number of user tweets is almost certainly influenced by the press conference and not just caused by Trump "fake

news" tweets. After removing the outliers from the data set, I started the box-plot again to detect news outliers. I run this procedure until no outlier was shown in the boxplot.

Most of the identified outliers are not caused by data entry or measurement errors. I will proceed with these outliers and run the correlation twice: with and without outliers to identify the outlier's influence on the correlation results. Table 6 shows the outliers and explanations.

Table 6: Outliers ranked by appearance. Outlier identification and possible reasons.

rank of outlier	date	Trump "fake news" Tweet	No of user tweets	explanation
1. outlier	12.Jän	Yes	2360	public press conference,Trumps "fake news" accusation was a prominent topic in the media- probably this was more influencial on the number of user tweets
2. outlier	15.Mär	Yes	18	problem with query, slow Twitter traffic, technical problems
3. outlier	17.Feb	Yes	2039	public press conference,Trumps "fake news" accusation was a prominent topic in the media- probably this was more influencial on the number of user tweets
4. outlier	25.Feb	Yes	1408	no explanation
5. outlier	18.Feb	Yes	1655	no explanation
6. outlier	16.Feb	Yes	1625	public press conference,Trumps "fake news" accusation was a prominent topic in the media- probably this was more influencial on the number of user tweets
7. outlier	15.Feb	Yes	28	problem with query, slow Twitter traffic, technical problems
8. outlier	20.Feb	Yes	1298	no explanation
9. outlier	03.Feb	Yes	1304	no explanation
10. outlier	11.Jän	Yes	2364	public press conference,Trumps "fake news" accusation was a prominent topic in the media- probably this was more influencial on the number of user tweets
11. outlier	09.Jän	Yes	267	no explanation

I decided to exclude those data, where there is a reasonable explanation like date entry error or measurement error. Additionally, unusual values, that may be affected by another event compared to Trumps "fake news" tweet, were also excluded. This is the case for the days in January (11th and 12th) and February (16th and 17th) where Trump held these memorable press conferences. Consequently, I excluded the following outliers: no. 1,2,3,6,7,10 and keep these outliers, where there is no a reasonable explanation (see table 8).
82

To get a snapshot of the outlier's influence on the correlation I did the point biserial correlation.

Table 7: Comparison of point-biserial correlation coefficient in SPSS 24.

Results in comparison	with outliers	without defined outliers
r_{pb}	0.40	0.36
$p < 0.05$	0.000004	0.000088
r_{pb}^2	16.32%	12.74%

The table summarizes the different results with and without outliers. Excluding outliers means a loss in the strength of the correlation. But nevertheless, there is a small to medium correlation between Trump "fake news" tweets and number of user tweets accusing news media accounts for being "fake news".

In summary, there is a significant ($p < 0.05$) small to medium/moderate correlation (r_{pb}) (Cohen 1988 cited in Laerd Statistics 2017).

Deciding whether Pearson's r is the right measure of the strength of the linear relationship between the two given variables I further need to check the following assumptions: homogeneity of variance and normality.

Table 8: Comparison of results: test of homogeneity of variance and tests of normality. Explorative data analysis in SPSS 24.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	without outliers	with outliers
significance value $p > 0.05$	0.110	0.028

Tests of Normality	without outliers	with outliers
significance value $p > 0.05$		
no fake news tweets by Trump	0.001	0.001
fake news tweets by Trump	0.089	0.008

The data set with the removed outliers performs better concerning homogeneity ($p= 0.110$) and partly normality (for category "fake news tweets by Trump" $p= 0.089$). Unfortunately, the p- value for the category "no fake news tweets by Trump" is below the needed level. Leard Statistics (2017) suppose that "*if the sample sizes are greater than 50, you would probably benefit from using*

graphical methods such as a Normal Q-Q Plot because at larger sample sizes this test will flag even minor deviations from normality as statistically significant (i.e., not normally distributed)." As there are 91 observations within the "no fake news tweets by Trump" category, I will follow this suggestion.

The data set without outliers shows better results for homogeneity of variance and normality and a Q-Q Plot shows a normal distribution for both categories. Consequently, I continue to use the point-biserial correlation to test my hypothesis. The result of the correlation calculations is presented in the next chapter.

3.4 Results

I run the point biserial correlation without outliers in SPSS. As a result, the correlation is a little bit weaker than including outliers.

Figure 27: Point-biserial correlation coefficient [excluding outliers]. SPSS 24

		Trump w/o fake news tweet	No of user tweets: fake news & media outlet
Trump w/o fake news tweet	Pearson correlation	1	0.357**
	significance (two-sided)		0.000
	n	115	115
No of user tweets: fake news & media outlet	Pearson correlation	0.357**	1
	significance (two-sided)	0.000	
	n	115	115

*Note.** correlation on the level of 0,01(double-sided) is significant.*

The magnitude of the Pearson correlation shows a value of $r_{pb} = 0.36$. Additionally, the coefficient has a positive sign (+), what means that the group of the dichotomous variable with the highest coding has the highest mean value of the two groups in terms of your continuous variable. In my case, it is: Trump tweeted including the term "fake news".

The small to medium correlation is significant (p < 0.05 -> p= 0.000088). There were more user tweets labeling the defined news media as "fake news" if Trump uses the term "fake news" in his tweets (mean 892, standard deviation +/- 60) than if he is not using the term (mean: 572, sd +/-37). To measure the effect size, one can use the coefficient of determination (Sheskin, 2011 cited in Laerd Statistics 2017) and is calculated as follows: $r_{pb}^2 = r_{pb} * r_{pb}$.

The coefficient of determination $r_{pb}^2 = r_{pb} * r_{pb}$ shows that Trump "fake news" tweets accounts for 12.7% of the variability in number of user tweets.

As a result, I can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses:

1. *If Donald Trump uses the term "fake news" in his tweets the number of Twitter users applying this term in direct conversation (f.ex: @CNN) with news media organizations increases on Twitter.*

4. Discussion

This study contributes to our understanding of the influence of politicians on trust in media. The empirical research shows that there is a small to medium correlation between the use of the specific term "fake news" by Donald Trump and user's tendency to use this term against established media companies like CNN, The New York Times etc.

Although a small correlation could be proven, some limitations concerning these finding exist.

Firstly, I did not observe media coverage during the given time frame, to examine whether news articles about Trump are influencing Twitter user's activity concerning direct accusations of news media accounts. In terms of confirmation bias and the following hostile media effect, another important variable would be the amount of negative news coverage concerning Trump during the given time frame. Further, I did not examine the political partisanship of the Twitter users. It is just an assumption that Twitter users who support Trump, are more likely to start a directed "fake news" accusation at CNN f.ex., if CNN published a negative article about Trump. As already presented in some of the PEW Research studies (see chapter 2.2), political partisanship influences the media brand exposure and trust in the media in general.

Secondly, to collect the data was a difficult challenge for many reasons (see chapter 3.3): limitations set by Twitter and the expansive access to historical Twitter data. Due to the limitation in data collection, the data does not show the entire conversations around the "fake news" accusation against established news media accounts on Twitter. Andrew Schrock (2017) discussed the data-driven future from a social scientific perspective to define communication as data. The author refers to Kevin Driscoll and Shawn Walker (2014) who "*argued that data derived from a common platform such as Twitter are unstable even across different collection methods. Social media platforms are not just where communication happens—they shape what we might know of communication*" (Schrock 2017, p. 703 ref. to Dicroll & Walker 2014).

Despite these limitations of the empirical research, the data indicates that Donald Trump fuels the intensity of the user's "fake news" accusations as these specific comments increase. Trump plays a (small) role in influencing news

media's reputation and image on social media. As reputation *"is the degree of trust (or distrust) in a firm`s ability to meet customer's expectations on a given attribute" (*Nguyen and Leblanc 2001, p. 228-229), news media needs to react on the politician's "anti-media" propaganda by calling them "fake news". Established news media as The New York Times and CNN in America or the VÖZ in Austria have already developed counterstrategies in advertising to re-built credibility and trust (chapter 2.4). Another counterstrategy to strike against reputational damage is to take legal action. Florian Klenk, an Austrian journalist sued a politician from the conservative party ÖVP, who said that an article by Klenk about an ÖVP foundation is "fake news". Klenk won the legal dispute in July 2017 (Der Standard 2017).

In summary, the reputational damage by politicians to media organizations is an issue, which media companies need to address. Additionally, the rise of "real" fake news as an economic and political instrument (Bakir & McStay, 2017) and the power of algorithms and social network effects like supporting selective exposure of news and information (Dwyer & Martin 2016, Wallace 2017, Cooke 2017) are recent developments in society that might deepen a citizen`s partisanship concerning politics and media brand exposure as well as the distrust in media.

Therefore, increasing trust is an important objective for news media. On the one hand for economic reasons like keeping enough readers/customers. And on the other hand, regarding a systems-theoretical approach, trust is needed to fulfill media's function in a democratic society. And a really important function is information transmission, where trust is a crucial precondition. Consequently, the following question arises: what can media organizations do to increase trust?

One recent development is the introduction of fact-checking formats (Van Aelst et al. 2017, Bakir & McStay 2017). These formats aim to preserve the competence for accuracy and high-quality journalism and to counter the so called opinion based "alternative facts" by politicians. Initiatives like the "Facebook Journalism Project" (Simo 2017) that *"is designed to support journalism and news literacy, and to serve as a hub for journalists and publishers to learn and share*". Or the cooperation during 2016 US election, where Associated Press and ABC teamed up with Facebook to create an alarm mechanism if content

was probably fake or misleading. These are just a small selection of attempts to face this fake news challenge. Bakir and McStay (2017) listed some other initiatives and experiments with fact checking and an interesting project from First Draft (First Draft 2017). They created a collaborative journalism project called "Cross Check" (First Draft 2017) with support from Google Lab and 17 media companies during French election in April and May 2017 to reduce costs of fact-checking.

These initiatives show, that content providers (media outlets/journalists) and other players who are responsible for the further dissemination of news and content (Facebook, Google) realized that especially the rise of fake news in terms of misinformation will soon become a significant threat for society and political decision making.

On a theoretical level, the communication, political and educational sciences must have a broad discourse concerning media's normative functions for a democracy, which is under the "attack by fake news" and "alternative facts". Will there be a change from an information function to a verification function ("fact checks")? Will a renaissance of investigative journalism be the probable answer for a crisis of trust? These are only two examples of questions that need to be addressed regarding the journalistic self-concept and profession. Quandt (2012) demands from institutionalized media a reinvention and recon-struction of public communication and journalism. "*Obviously, this would mean new solutions and ideas, what journalism could and should be in hypercomplex societies – beyond a simple embrace of participatory formats under the roof of 'old' journalistic outlets and concepts* "(Quandt 2012, p:18).

Further, information literacy, especially in the digital and social media public will play an enormous role regarding the rise of fake news. Misinformation on the on hand and anti-media propaganda by populists which fuels the distrust and reputational damage of established media on the other hand. Cooke (2017, p: 218) argues that "*critical consumers of information adapt a metaliter-acy approach*", what is defined as "*an overarching and self-referential frame-work that integrates emerging technologies and unifies multiple literacy types. This redefinition of information literacy expands the scope of generally under-*

stood information competencies and places a particular emphasis on producing and sharing information in participatory digital environments" (Mackey and Jacobson 2011, p. 62-63).

The rise of populist anti-establishment parties (Kemmers et al. 2015) which fuel distrust in well-established information sources, and "*the potential for empathically optimized automated fake news*" (Bakir and McStay 2017, p: 17) to manipulate public mood are two major threats for media's basic functions for human beings (Bonfadelli 2010, p: 135): information, correlation (opinion formation) transmission (socialization, conveying values) and gratification. In addition, these two developments- the recent rise of populism and the production of fake news to manipulate public mood- are a challenge for democracy as well. A democracy as an ideal situation demands a well-informed citizen. "*The vitality of a representative democracy rests in large part on a voting public that is sufficiently informed about public affairs. Where citizens get their information—and particularly how they view their information sources—is thus a crucial element of understanding the health of a democratic system*" (Jones 2004, p: 60). As Müller (2013, p: 21) already mentioned in his research about the "Mechanism of Trust", "*a very low believability is not helpful when it comes to informing the public*." Therefore, restoring trust in the media or the production of trusted information will not only be a major challenge for media organizations but as well for democracy in general.

Appendix

1. Script for collecting Donald Trump Tweets

How to do it:

1. Open the link below in Google Chrome (replace the user name and dates with whatever is applicable):

   o https://twitter.com/search?f=tweets&vertical=default&q=from%3Areal-donaldtrump%20since%3A2015-01-01%20until%3A2015-12-31include%3Are-tweets&src=typd

   ➔ *Origin request from the editor*
   ➔ *My request: changing time to get the data in quarter pieces:*

   https://twitter.com/search?f=tweets&vertical=default&q=from%3Areal-donaldtrump%20since%3A2015-01-01%20until%3A2015-03-31include%3Are-tweets&src=typd]

   o Be sure to keep the "%3A" and "%20" parts intact

   o Recommended to do yearly, half-year, or monthly increments (rather than 5 years)

2. Open the Javascript console in Google Chrome:

   o Mac: cmd + option + j

   o PC: ctrl + shift + j

3. Paste in the full setInterval line below and press enter:

   o setInterval(function(){ scrollTo(0, document.body.scrollHeight) }, 2500)

   ➔

4. Wait until the page has stopped scrolling (could be 2-25 minutes depending on how many there are)

5. Paste in the javascript below and press enter (this will automatically copy the data to your computer's clipboard)

```
var allTweets = [];

var tweetElements = document.querySelectorAll('li.stream-item');

for (var i = 0; i < tweetElements.length; i++) {

        try{

                var el = tweetElements[i];

                allTweets.push({

                        id: el.getAttribute('data-item-id'),

                        user_id: el.querySelector('div.tweet').getAttribute('data-user-id'),
```

```
                         user_name:              el.querySelector('div.tweet').getAttribute('data-
          name'),

                         timestamp:              el.querySelector('a.tweet-timestamp').getAttrib-
                         ute('data-original-title')        ||        el.querySelector('a.tweet-
                         timestamp').getAttribute('title'),

                         text: el.querySelector('.tweet-text').textContent,

                         link: 'https://twitter.com' + el.querySelector('div.tweet').getAttrib-
                         ute('data-permalink-path'),

                         is_retweet: el.querySelector('.js-retweet-text') ? true : false,

                         retweets:   el.querySelector('.js-actionRetweet    .ProfileTweet-ac-
                         tionCountForPresentation').textContent,

                         favorites:   el.querySelector('.js-actionFavorite   .ProfileTweet-ac-
                         tionCountForPresentation').textContent,

                         replies:      el.querySelector('.js-actionReply        .ProfileTweet-ac-
                         tionCountForPresentation').textContent,

               });

          }catch(e){}

}

copy(allTweets);
```

➔

6. Paste in a text editor and save

7. NB: If there are a ton of tweets, it might be better to grab them in smaller increments - your computer might have a hard time copying 10,000 entries

2. Script for collecting relevant user Tweets

Step 1: Creating the news search by using Twitter Advanced Search (for weekly request)

https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=fake-news%20to%3AABC%2C%20OR%20to%3ANBC%2C%20OR%20to%3ACNN%2C%20OR%20to%3ACBS%2C%20OR%20to%3AMSM%2C%20OR%20to%3AMSNBC%2C%20OR%20to%3Anytimes%2C%20OR%20to%3AWashingtonPost%20%40ABC%2C%20OR%20%40NBC%2C%20OR%20%40CNN%2C%20OR%20%40CBS%2C%20OR%20%40MSM%2C%20OR%20%40MSNBC%2C%20OR%20%40nytimes%2C%20OR%20%40WashingtonPost%20since%3A2017-04-16%20until%3A2017-04-30&src=typd

Step 2-4: see script and explanations above

```
var allTweets = [];

var tweetElements = document.querySelectorAll('li.stream-item');

for (var i = 0; i < tweetElements.length; i++) {

        try{
```
➔ *Tweets without text f. ex would stop the javascript. So, every Tweet, that is technically wrong, or there is a problem will not be counted.*
```
                var el = tweetElements[i];

                allTweets.push({

                        id: el.getAttribute('data-item-id'),

                        user_id: el.querySelector('div.tweet').getAttribute('data-user-id'),

                        user_name: el.querySelector('div.tweet').getAttribute('data-name'),
```
➔ *Additional request to get User ID*
```
                        timestamp:  el.querySelector('a.tweet-timestamp').getAttribute('data-original-
                        title') || el.querySelector('a.tweet-timestamp').getAttribute('title'),

                        text: el.querySelector('.tweet-text').textContent,

                        link: 'https://twitter.com' + el.querySelector('div.tweet').getAttribute('data-per-
                        malink-path'),

                        is_retweet: el.querySelector('.js-retweet-text') ? true : false,

                        retweets:  el.querySelector('.js-actionRetweet  .ProfileTweet-actionCountFor-
                        Presentation').textContent,

                        favorites:  el.querySelector('.js-actionFavorite  .ProfileTweet-actionCountFor-
                        Presentation').textContent,

                        replies:     el.querySelector('.js-actionReply     .ProfileTweet-actionCountFor-
                        Presentation').textContent,

                });

        }catch(e){}

}

copy(allTweets);
```

3. Request to GNIP

<u>Received information after getting in contact with the data sales department:</u>

To allow you to apply filters that only extract data from the archive that you need, we support filtering through our PowerTrack syntax. If you would like additional examples of how to format rules, please view this documentation on how to convert plain English to PowerTrack.

92

Our data are delivered via flat-file download in JSON format. To see the structure and elements of the data you would receive, please see our data schema and sample payloads.

*Entry level data sets include up to 1 million Tweets over a 40 day period and start at **$1,250**. Pricing is inelastic until either threshold is exceeded. Price is impacted by both the time frame and Tweet pay-load size.*

When you are ready to go ahead and receive an estimate, please submit your PowerTrack-formatted filters to this web form (bit.ly/1xdata) and a detailed description of your intended use of data to this form: bit.ly/data-approval

_____

After checking the form, I did the following request:

Rules: contains:fake AND (contains:news OR contains:media) AND (@ABC OR @NBC OR @CNN OR @CBS OR @MSM OR @MSNBC OR @nytimes OR @washingtonpost)

_____

Answer of data sales department: *This search retrieved approximately 3.1 millions Tweets over the span of 212 Days. Cost of this dataset is $4,500.*

Break down for the following months:

January 2017:

30 Days, ~500K Tweets

$1,250

February 2017:

30 Days, ~1mm Tweets

$1,250

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Abstract (in English)

The crisis of trust in the media has become a major issue for democracy ever since popular politicians started to accuse the established news media of writing the untruth. At the same time the intentional dissemination of misinformation and biased information through social media platforms has contributed to a general distrust in the news. These developments are summarized under the term "fake news". This term became particularly popular at the beginning of Donald Trump`s presidency. Trump uses the already existing narrative "fake news", to influence the way people think and talk about media companies. This study examines the impact of Trump's negative talk against the news media. The analysis of Twitter data shows that there is a small to medium correlation between to use of the specific term "fake news" by Trump and user's tendency to use this term against established media companies like CNN and The New York Times. This study contributes to the understanding of the influence of politicians on media's reputation and moreover shows the impact on trust or distrust in media.

Abstract (in German)

Das Vertrauen in die Medien ist mittlerweile zu einem aktuellen demokratiepolitischen Thema geworden. Populäre Politiker und PolitikerInnen haben begonnen, etablierten Nachrichtenmedien falsche Berichterstattung zu unterstellen. Gleichzeitig hat die bewusste Verbreitung von Falschnachrichten und/oder politisch gefärbten Nachrichten zu einer weiteren Verunsicherung bezüglich der Integrität von Nachrichtenmedien geführt. Diese Entwicklungen werden unter dem Begriff „Fake News" zusammengefasst und. Der Begriff hat vor allem seit Donald Trumps Präsidentschaft an Popularität gewonnen. Trumps „Fake News" – Narrativ soll die Meinung der Bürger und Bürgerinnen gegenüber Medienunternehmen beeinflussen, die Trump kritisieren. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht den Einfluss von Trumps Diffamierung auf die Reputation von etablierten Medienunternehmen. Die Analyse von Twitter Daten ergab, dass Trumps Verwendung des Begriffs „Fake News", einen schwachen bis moderaten Einfluss auf die Anzahl der User Tweets mit selbigen Begriff gegenüber Twitter-Accounts von Medienunternehmen (wie CNN, The New York Times,...) hat. Dieses Ergebnis zeigt, dass Politiker und PolitikerInnen einen Einfluss auf die Reputation von und in weiterer Folge auf das Vertrauen in Medien haben.