

Political Polarization and Journalistic Practices: Adding Fuel to the Fire?

Initiative: Transformationswissen über Demokratien im Wandel – transdisziplinäre Perspektiven

Ausschreibung: Task Forces

Bewilligung: 05.02.2024

Laufzeit: 1 Jahre

The issue of political polarization challenges even relatively stable countries like Germany and Sweden. Frequently, news media coverage is blamed for exacerbating polarization. Yet, thus far, these claims lack scientific evidence and we lack knowledge about countermeasures. This is why we examine how journalistic practices contribute to polarization and explore potential mitigation strategies. The comparative, multi-method approach of the project combines expertise of researchers from different disciplines with that of journalists from leading media outlets from both countries. This collaborative model allows for a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between media and polarization while ensuring both scientific rigor and practical relevance. We involve journalists and academics during all phases of the research process, starting with a joint exploratory workshop aimed at refining our research objectives. This is followed by computational content analysis to identify instances of polarized media content. Subsequently, we design and use experimental stimuli to test the impact of journalistic practices on audiences. The project culminates in the development of empirically-supported guidelines and best practices for responsible journalism. These empirically-supported guidelines will be field-tested by selected journalists, further solidifying journalism's role as a balancing force in contentious, polarized debates.

Projektbeteiligte

Prof. Dr. Michael Brüggemann

Universität Hamburg
Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften
Institut für Journalistik und
Kommunikationswissenschaft
Hamburg

Dr. Anamaria Dutceac Segesten

Lund University
Center for Languages and Literature
European Studies
Lund
Schweden

Stefan Schmitt

ZEIT-Verlag
DIE ZEIT, science section
Hamburg

Lars Mogensen

Swedish Public Radio (SR)
Stockholm
Schweden

Heidi Avellan

Sydsvenska Dagbladet
Malmö
Schweden

Dr. Mike Farjam

Universität Hamburg
Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften
Institut für Journalistik und
Kommunikationswissenschaft
Hamburg