

Televised Debates, Second Screens, and Filter Bubbles

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today



Second screening

= "bundle of practices that involve integrating, and switching across and between, live broadcast and social media"

(Vaccari et al. 2015)

- ▶ increasingly popular in general
- ▶ most prominent during media events
- ▶ motivations for second screening: discuss, get further information and gauge others' opinions

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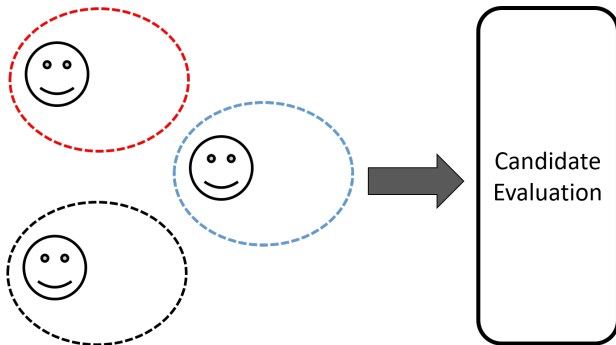
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- ▶ ... but there is a fair chance that users get confronted with attitude-discordant contents.

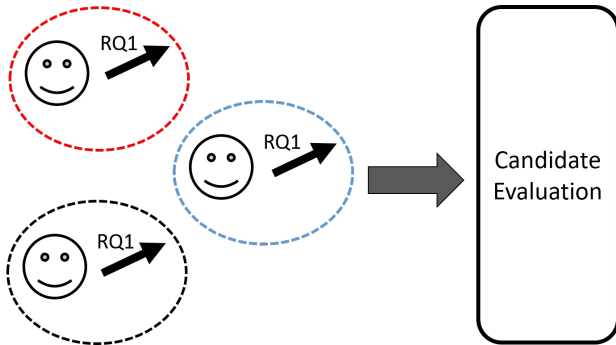
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- ▶ Homophily on social media platforms is a thing, ...
- ▶ ... but there is a fair chance that users get confronted with attitude-discordant contents.
- ▶ Unexplored: Effects of Filter Bubbles on perception of political information. Why is that?
 - ▶ Idiosyncratic information environments: unobservable from outside and hard to generalize their features
 - ▶ Endogeneity: self-selection into exposure makes effect estimation through purely observational data pretty much impossible

Televised Debates and Filter Bubbles





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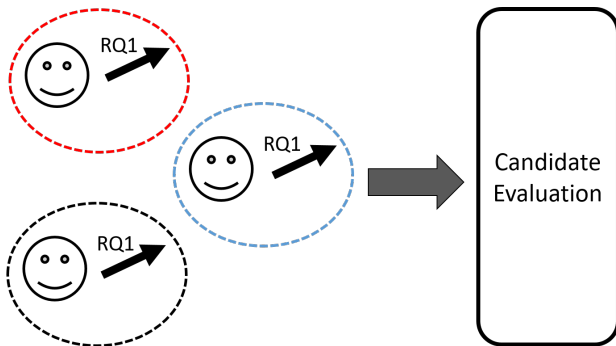
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 - ▶ quasi-statistical sense

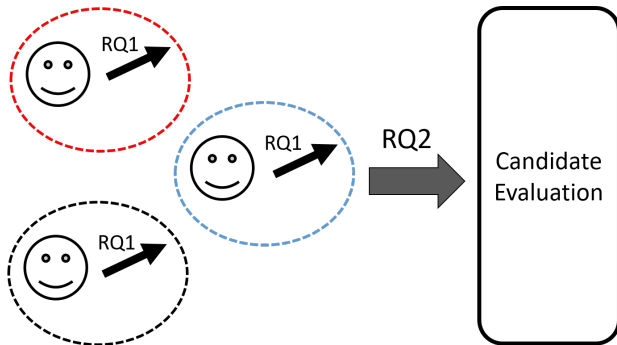
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- ▶ Different modes of information processing possible (Schulz & Roessler 2012)
 - ▶ quasi-statistical sense
 - ▶ looking-glass perception

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- ▶ Televised debates are highly complex → need for heuristics
- ▶ Pre-existing attitudes towards candidates/parties
- ▶ Viewers geared by other users' opinions (social influence theory):
 - ▶ Political attitudes in general (Levitan & Verhulst 2016) and candidate evaluation in televised debates shown to be susceptible to social influence
 - ▶ Social influence can occur in computer-mediated communication spaces (see Maruyama et al. 2017)

Study Design



- Methodological innovation: Laboratory Live-Experiment on German televised debate 2017

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- ▶ Between-subjects design with three different twitter walls containing real tweets

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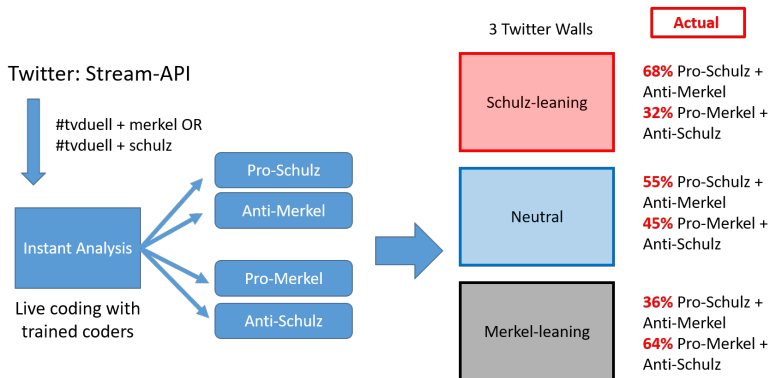


- ▶ Methodological innovation: Laboratory Live-Experiment on German televised debate 2017
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- ▶ Methodological innovation: Laboratory Live-Experiment on German televised debate 2017
- ▶ Between-subjects design with three different twitter walls containing real tweets
- ▶ Sample: 119 participants highly educated and rather young, balanced in gender
- ▶ Random assignment worked, but coincidental deviations in party ID



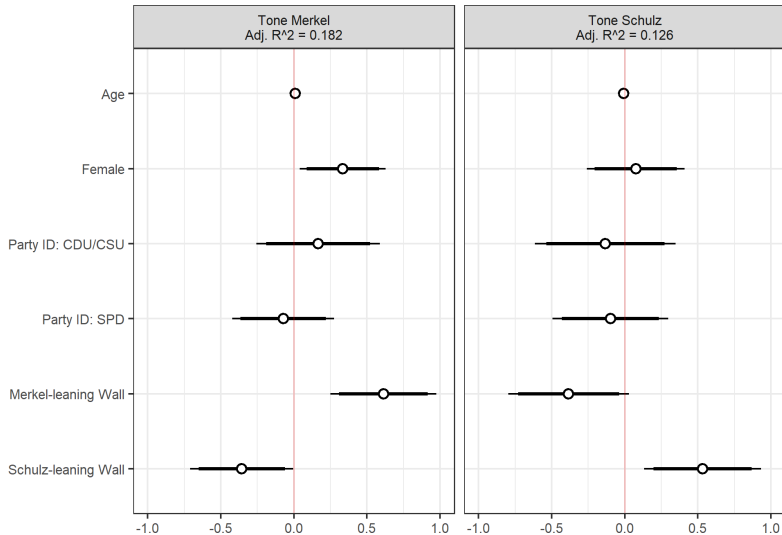
Question

Recalling the tweets you could observe during the debate:
Altogether, how was [Angela Merkel/Martin Schulz] portrayed in those messages from your point of view?

1 = very negative; 5 = very positive

RQ1: Perception of the Filter Bubble tone

DV: Tone on Twitter Wall towards Candidates



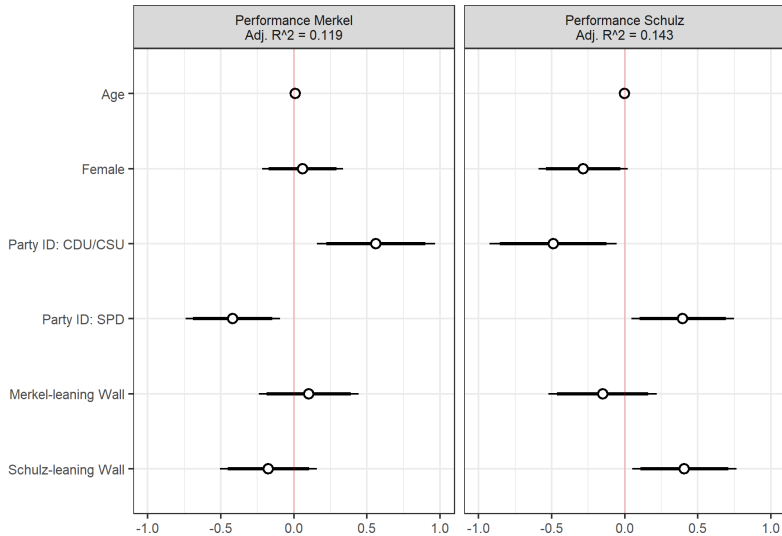
Question

Altogether, how did [Angela Merkel/Martin Schulz] perform during the debate?

1 = very bad; 5 = very good

RQ2: Effects on candidate evaluation

DV: Debate Performance of Candidates



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- ▶ Implications: Filter Bubble effects opening ways to influence political attitudes through organized collective actions on social media channels ("Hijacking the filter bubble")
- ▶ Upcoming: Survey Experiment (positive vs. negative tweets)

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- ▶ Schulz A, Roessler P. 2012. The Spiral of Silence and the Internet. Selection of Online Content and the Perception of the Public Opinion Climate in Computer-Mediated Communication Environments. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 24 (3):346-67.
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