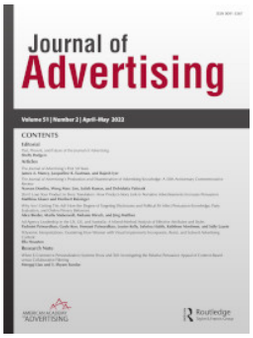

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Why Am I Getting This Ad? How the Degree of Targeting Disclosures and Political Fit Affect Persuasion Knowledge, Party Evaluation, and Online Privacy Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

Political advertising on social media heavily capitalizes on the fact that citizens leave behind data traces through their online behaviors. Even though this allows parties to target citizens based on their age, gender, or even specific interests, there is often a mismatch between the parties and the individuals' party preferences. This study investigates how different degrees of targeting disclosures (demographic/location-based targeting disclosure versus preference-based targeting disclosure) and the political fit of targeted ads (high fit versus low fit) affect participants' party evaluation and online privacy behaviors. Two dimensions of persuasion knowledge, perceived manipulative intent (PMI) and targeting knowledge (TK), act as mediators. Results from an online experiment ($N = 430$) reveal that the degree of targeting disclosure did not activate these dimensions. However, high political fit of the ads led to lower PMI and higher TK. In addition, political fit improved party evaluations via PMI and TK and reduced privacy behaviors via PMI. We conclude that citizens do not activate their defense mechanisms against targeted ads when the targeting comes from a favored party.

In the age of digitalization, data have become the currency of political campaigns. Based on large online data sets, political parties can develop and deliver tailored messages directly to the social media newsfeeds of the most susceptible citizens (Anstead 2017, 2018; Kreiss and McGregor 2018). Key events in Western democracies, such as U.S. presidential elections and the Brexit referendum, have revealed the unprecedented scope of targeted political advertising online: In an attempt to influence the political opinion climate, Cambridge Analytica harvested data from more than 50 million Facebook users to build psychological profiles and target individuals by exploiting their inferred hopes and fears (Cadwalladr 2018).

Not all of the tactics used in targeted political advertising are as unethical, extreme, or novel as those witnessed in the Cambridge Analytica scandal (Anstead 2017). Targeted advertising also entails targeting broader demographic groups, such as specific age groups or people in specific locations (e.g., geotargeting), which is comparable to long-standing offline practices in political campaigning (Anstead 2017; Baldwin-Philippi 2017). However, targeted advertising can also be based on online behavioral data, for instance, which sites have been visited or which topics and ads have attracted someone's attention (Boerman, Kruikemeier, and Zuiderveen Borgesius 2017; Smit, Van Noort, and Voorveld 2014). Social media platforms like Facebook give political parties easy access

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to these data, making it an increasingly important strategic tool for political campaigning (Kreiss and McGregor 2018; Dobber et al. 2019). Overall, campaigners decide which voters to address and which ones to neglect (Endres and Kelly 2018). Depending on the goals of the campaign, politicians may try to keep their current voters or solicit new voters by using demographic/location-based (dem./loc.) or preference-based (pref.) targeting. But how do these tailored political advertisements influence citizens?

A few studies have investigated the effects of targeted advertising in a political context (Broockman and Green 2014; Hersh and Schaffner 2013; Kruikemeier, Sezgin, and Boerman 2016). However, the results have been mixed: While some studies showed that targeted political advertising can lead to positive effects (e.g., evaluations of candidates, political parties; Holman, Schneider, and Pondel 2015; Zarouali, Dobber, et al. 2020), others found mixed effects (Broockman and Green 2014; Hersh and Schaffner 2013), and some revealed negative effects (Kruikemeier, Sezgin, and Boerman 2016; Turow et al. 2012). The different outcomes may depend on the degree of targeting (demographic/location-based targeting versus preference-based targeting) as well as which party is sending the ads. In a commercial context, some studies have already shown that the degree of targeting (e.g., Aguirre et al. 2015; Summers, Smith, and Reczek 2016) as well as the sender of the ad (e.g., Van den Broeck, Poels, and Walrave 2017; Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015b) can influence participants' reactions. However, these factors have not been investigated in detail in a political context.

This study specifically focuses on the influence of different degrees of targeting disclosures to investigate if the perceived degree of the applied targeting strategy manipulated with a detailed disclosure statement influences citizens' attitudes and behavioral intentions. Disclosures can be described as an important factor to raise awareness for and understanding of a specific advertising strategy (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, and Neijens 2012). Based on the current empirical evidence, a low degree of a targeting strategy in this study is defined as the usage of data which users themselves give access to, such as demographic and location-based data (i.e., demographic/location-based targeting). By contrast, a high degree of a targeting strategy combines demographic targeting with targeting based on analyzing specific online behaviors and making conclusions about a person's preferences and wishes (i.e., preference-based targeting). In other words, a high degree of a targeting strategy gives the impression that some data have to be analyzed to gain specific information. This definition is in line with previous research basing the distinction between the different degrees of targeting on the amount of information used for the targeting procedure, with high degrees combining several dimensions, for example, demographic/preference-based targeting (White et al. 2008; Zarouali et al. 2019).

As a second factor this study focuses on the political fit between the sender and the receiver. The effects of the fit or misfit of targeted ads in a political context have been already investigated based on different targeting information, such as identity (e.g., gender, Holman, Schneider, and Pondel 2015) or personality traits (e.g., Krotzek 2019; Zarouali, Dobber, et al. 2020). To the best of our knowledge, it is still unclear from current scholarship whether citizens are more willing to accept targeting when it comes from parties which they favor as compared to parties which they dislike.

This study focuses specifically on two important outcome variables: On an attitudinal level, this study investigates the effects on party evaluation. In this context, studies showed mixed results (e.g., Holman, Schneider, and Pondel 2015; Kruikemeier, Sezgin, and Boerman 2016). In other words, from the current scientific evidence we are not able to conclude if attitudes toward a political party are affected by the degree of a targeting disclosure and the sender of the message (political party). The second outcome variable focuses on a behavioral reaction, namely, online privacy behaviors. Studies showed that people in general are motivated to protect their data online (Büchi, Just, and Latzer 2017; Summers, Smith, and Reczek 2016). Furthermore, research concludes that higher knowledge of targeting strategies can contribute to more privacy protection behaviors (e.g., Strycharz et al. 2019). Boerman and colleagues (2018) additionally showed that the perceived invasiveness of online data collection can lead to higher privacy protection behaviors. This perceived invasiveness might be affected by disclosing a high degree of targeting strategy as well as by the sender of the message. However, it is previously unstudied how different degrees of targeting disclosures and political fit influence this behavior.

The Persuasion Knowledge Model

In our study, we build on the persuasion knowledge model. Persuasion knowledge "helps [consumers] identify how, when, and why marketers try to influence them" (Friestad and Wright 1994, p. 1).

Specifically, the concept subsumes knowledge structures about persuasion agents, tactics and strategies used, as well as motives behind persuasion. Importantly, this resource has to be activated to effectively help individuals cope with persuasive attempts. Thus, only when individuals have sufficient knowledge about persuasion and are motivated and able to use this knowledge can they effectively deal with advertising (Moses and Baldwin 2005). In addition to their knowledge about persuasion itself, individuals might also rely on knowledge about the agent as well as their target knowledge when judging advertising (Friestad and Wright 1994). So far, a large number of studies investigated the relationship between the activation of persuasion knowledge and individuals' potential to cope with persuasive attempts (for a review, see Ham, Nelson, and Das 2015). In the context of targeted political ads, Kruikemeier, Sezgin, and Boerman (2016) demonstrated that recipients' reactions depend on their capacities to activate their persuasion knowledge.

So far, most effect studies that build on the persuasion knowledge model focus on singular aspects of the model such as the inference of agents' motives or manipulative intent (Campbell and Kirmani 2008; Ham, Nelson, and Das 2015). However, recently scholars have emphasized the importance of taking the multifaceted nature of persuasion knowledge into account (e.g., see Boerman, van Reijmersdal, et al. 2018). Moreover, persuasion knowledge is also subject to constant change. As noted by Friestad and Wright (1994), even adults continue to learn about new advertising practices and develop more sophisticated understandings of such tactics through new experiences and social learning. Therefore, measurement scales constantly have to be adapted to new practices to question whether individuals activate knowledge about new advertising practices such as targeted advertising. To reflect the multidimensionality of different types of persuasion knowledge in this study, we focus on three different knowledge structures that are especially relevant in this specific context.

Perceived Persuasive Intent

First, perceived persuasive intent (PPI) describes individuals' awareness of an agent's persuasive motive. PPI has been described as a critical dimension in the processing of persuasive messages in prior research and is a prerequisite for the activation of other forms of persuasion knowledge (Campbell and Kirmani 2008). In line with Boerman and colleagues (2018), we define perceived persuasive intent as recipients' "understanding that the aim of sponsored content is to sell products and that it attempts to influence consumers' behavior by changing their mental states, for instance their attitudes and cognitions about a product" (p. 674). In the context of political advertising, this means that citizens understand that parties aim at attracting voters, improving their image, and/or otherwise gaining a political advantage through the use of strategic communication.

In the context of sponsored social media advertising, individuals' recognition of persuasive content is likely to be high. In the domain of targeted political advertising on Facebook, parties are required to clearly mark every post as "Sponsored by" and indicate the financer of an ad, therefore making the persuasive intent overt (Facebook 2020). In addition, previous studies have already found a certain customization of individuals to online sponsored content, such that they infer persuasive intent from all ad messages (Morimoto 2021). Therefore, it can be argued that social media users can easily identify targeted political advertising as advertising. Nevertheless, PPI will be controlled for in all models of the present research as it constitutes a key element of persuasion knowledge (Campbell and Kirmani 2008). Consequently, our study centers around two dimensions of persuasion knowledge that should be especially relevant to targeted political advertising: the perceived manipulative intent (PMI) as well as targeting knowledge (TK).

Perceived Manipulative Intent

PMI describes the evaluation of the appropriateness of an ad. According to the persuasion knowledge model, people not only hold beliefs about the tactics that advertisers use but in addition "will develop beliefs about the appropriateness (e.g., fairness, manipulativeness) of specific types of persuasive tactics" (Friestad and Wright 1994, p. 5; see also Ham, Nelson, and Das 2015). The concept of inference of manipulative intent was first operationalized by Campbell (1995) and described as "consumer inferences that the advertiser is attempting to persuade by inappropriate, unfair, or manipulative means" (p. 228). In their review article of persuasion knowledge measures, Ham and colleagues (2015) found that the measure developed by Campbell is the most consistently used measurement instrument of situational persuasion knowledge across different contexts—but also that it captures an attitudinal, evaluative dimension of persuasion knowledge as opposed to the mere recognition of persuasive

intent. Empirically, a number of studies in the field found that the recognition of persuasive intent and evaluative dimensions of persuasion knowledge, also referred to as attitudinal knowledge of persuasion, constitute separable dimensions of persuasion knowledge in individuals' minds (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, and Neijens 2012; van Reijmersdal et al. 2017). Moreover, their effects might differ. While the mere recognition of persuasive intent per se might not lead to negative evaluations and defensive processing, individuals might be especially likely to show reactance toward an ad when the tactics used violate their moral or normative standards (Campbell and Kirmani 2008; van Reijmersdal et al. 2016). In a validation of multiple dimensions of persuasion knowledge, manipulative intent has shown a robust and strong correlation with ad beliefs, avoidance, and skepticism (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, et al. 2018).

Perceived manipulative intent might have an important role in individual processing of perceived targeted political advertising. As posed by Friestad and Wright (1994), individuals learn not only through their own experiences but also from public discourses and interpersonal discussion about advertising. Following the Cambridge Analytica scandal, social media platforms have been under constant public scrutiny for allowing the use of targeting for political causes, which in some cases has even led platforms to impose a ban on targeted political advertising (Isaac 2020). Considering these contextual factors, it is important to take individuals' normative judgment of the approriateness of targeted advertising into account, as it might be a relevant predictor of resistance toward targeted ads.

Targeting Knowledge

In addition to this dimension, this study is intended to advance the research of persuasion knowledge in the specific context of targeted advertising by adding the dimension of perceived targeting knowledge (TK). We define TK as individuals' beliefs of agents' use of their online data to tailor messages to recipients. By taking TK into account, this study seeks to answer the question of whether individuals actually possess and activate specific knowledge about targeting practices to judge and respond to such content. As advertising tactics evolve, individuals constantly need to update their knowledge on new persuasive strategies in order to resist unwanted persuasive attacks (Friestad and Wright 1994). Subsequently, measurement instruments must be updated to reflect the specific context of a persuasive attempt and account for new strategies (Campbell and Kirmani 2008).

New online advertising strategies such as targeting are not always easily recognized and understood by recipients (Boerman, Kruikemeier, and Zuiderveen Borgesius 2017). While concerns over the usage and collection of online data are high among the European populace (European Commission 2019), surveys still reveal a notable knowledge gap in regard to such a practice. In election campaigns, new data-driven political persuasion techniques are widely used (Dobber et al. 2017). However, Dobber and colleagues (2019) showed that only 33% of their sample were aware of political behavioral targeting. In addition, out of the one-third who claimed to be aware of targeting, only one-third correctly answered the knowledge questions about targeting. Similarly, only around one-fifth of European Union citizens feels sufficiently informed about the collection and use of their online data (European Commission 2019). It is therefore uncertain if citizens are capable of recognizing when they are being targeted with specific content based on their online data.

The recognition of targeting is an important element in the processing of targeted messages, because it might induce what the persuasion knowledge model refers to as a "change of meaning" (Friestad and Wright 1994, p. 12). If citizens are exposed to a message by a political party that is especially relevant to their needs and political preferences, they might feel that the party strongly aligns with their preferences and cares about the same issues that they do. However, if citizens suspect that their data were used to select and design messages specifically for them, they might realize that this perceived high alignment is artificially fabricated and that they are in fact presented with a subset of a vast pool of different messages. Moreover, they might realize that their data were used against their will, which could further reduce the effectiveness of the ad.

It is important to note that mere recognition is only one of several knowledge structures that individuals might activate when being exposed to targeted content. Persuasion knowledge involves how and why a persuasive message was "designed, constructed, and delivered" (Friestad and Wright 1994, p. 2). Beyond recognizing targeting, individuals also form different beliefs about why this tactic is being used (van Reijmersdal et al. 2017), which psychological mediators (e.g., increased liking) might be at play, and which technical aspects the tactic involves (see also Park 2013; Strycharz et al. 2019). Nevertheless, this

study emphasizes the knowledge of "how" messages are spread and crafted, that is, the recognition of the use of targeting. Recognition, as a first step, is highly relevant in the context of targeted advertising given the difficulties that individuals have in recognizing targeted content (Boerman, Kruikemeier, and Zuiderveen Borgesius 2017; Dobber et al. 2019). In addition, studies on covert advertising frequently argue that advertising first has to be recognized to set other processes and the activation of other knowledge structures into motion (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, and Neijens 2012, 2014; Krouwer, Poels, and Paulussen 2017; Tutaj and van Reijmersdal 2012). Similarly, individuals first have to recognize that a message uses targeting practices before they can retrieve other forms of knowledge, such as the perceived motives behind the use of the tactic.

In summary, by taking three different dimensions of persuasion knowledge into account, this study can distinguish between the following separate processes: (1) that individuals resist targeted political advertising simply because they recognize the content as advertising and therefore might reject persuasive political messages irrespective of the fact that their data have been used to tailor the messages; (2) that individuals resist targeted political advertising because of moral concerns about the ad irrespective of having detailed knowledge about targeting practices (e.g., being overall concerned about the use of data without knowing specifically how this affects the specific message and its persuasiveness); (3) that individuals resist targeted political advertising because they have specific knowledge about being confronted with a message that was tailored to them based on their online data and therefore take this strategy into account when processing the ad.

Effects of the Degree of Targeting Disclosures and Political Fit on Persuasion Knowledge

Targeting can happen on several levels and can include a variety of personal information for the targeting process. Previous research has focused on different aspects of targeting, for instance, on the effects of disclosures (for an overview, see Boerman and van Reijmersdal 2016), different degrees of personalization (White et al. 2008; Daems et al. 2019), and specific targeting information such as demographics and interests (Zarouali et al. 2019), or personality traits (Zarouali, Dobber, et al. 2020; Krotzek 2019). Moreover, studies on political targeting suggest that political parties use targeting to different degrees, ranging from broad demographic- or location-based categories, such as age, gender, or location, to behavioral data, such as analyzing clicking behavior or website visits and making conclusions about issue relevance or personality traits (Anstead 2017; Zarouali, Dobber, et al. 2020). While social media users often give access to information on their social media profiles regarding their gender, age, or the country in which they live, they might be more reluctant to share very precise information about their own preferences, wishes, or topics of interest to them (Nosko, Wood, and Molema 2010). Therefore, information about preferences and interests might be perceived as more sensitive.

Because activation of persuasion knowledge can be considered a precondition for resistance against unwanted persuasive attempts (Friestad and Wright 1994), we aim to investigate to what extent disclosing different degrees of targeting strategies activates the two dimensions of persuasion knowledge, namely, PMI and TK. In this regard, it was argued that targeting relying on very detailed personal information, for example, specific interests, can lead to resistance (White et al. 2008, Zarouali et al. 2019). Previous studies have shown that people especially criticize the practice of tailoring ads based on behavioral—and therefore probably more sensitive—data (Aguirre et al. 2015; Kim, Barasz, and John 2019). Based on the current empirical evidence, we expect that individuals who are provided with the information that their data have been used to target them with political ads will perceive higher levels of PMI and higher levels of TK:

> **H1: (a)** Disclosing targeting based on demographic/location data and **(b)** disclosing targeting based on preferences lead to higher levels of PMI as compared to no targeting.

> **H2: (a)** Disclosing targeting based on demographic/location data and **(b)** disclosing targeting based on preferences lead to higher levels of TK as compared to no targeting.

In a commercial context, some studies have shown that a higher degree of targeting is seen as more critical (Aguirre et al. 2015; Kim, Barasz, and John 2019). It is still unclear, however, how different degrees of targeting disclosures influence users' persuasion knowledge. Moreover, as described, studies with a commercial context cannot be applied to a political context (Kruikemeier, Sezgin, and Boerman 2016). Because no study has investigated the effects of disclosing different degrees of targeting in the context of political campaigning on social media, the proposed study tries to test whether demographically (i.e., demographic/

location-based targeting) or behaviorally (i.e., preference-based targeting) targeted messages evoke different levels of persuasion knowledge:

RQ1: How does disclosing targeting based on demographic/location-based data and on preference-based data differ in their effects on PMI and TK?

In a commercial context, studies showed that the fit between a person's personality and the message led to the impression that the message was more relevant and triggered cognitive processing (Wheeler, Petty, and Bizer 2005). However, individuals are not exposed only to those ads that fit their needs and interests. Only around 6 in 10 U.S. citizens agree that their interests are reflected very well or somewhat well in the personalized ads they receive, which suggests a noticeable proportion of mistargeting occurs on a day-to-day basis (Auxier et al. 2019). In other words, the success of the targeting strategy depends on the fit between the presented targeted ads and individuals' characteristics, interests, or other personal information. The present study examines the interplay of the message sender and the message receiver by examining the political fit between the individuals' political ideology and the senders' ideology.

Drawing on self-congruency theory, scholars in advertising and marketing research found that ads matching the self-image of recipients have positive effects on consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions (Hong and Zinkhan 1995). In other words, people feel the need for harmony, which makes them more responsive to self-congruent messages, or to messages which fit their own beliefs and attitudes (Hong and Zinkhan 1995). Due to the nature of targeted political advertising—which is the matching of an ad to specific characteristics of the message receivers (e.g., Baldwin-Philippi 2017)—it is of importance to investigate the effects of congruency effects in this context (Zarouali, Dobber, et al. 2020). Scholars have examined the effects of the fit or misfit of targeted ads in a political context based on different targeting information, such as identity (e.g., gender, Holman, Schneider, and Pondel 2015) or personality traits (e.g., Krotzek 2019; Zarouali, Dobber, et al. 2020). It is still unclear, however, how targeted political ads influence recipients based on political fit. Some studies suggest that voters base their evaluation of an ad on the source's ideology (Dowling and Wichowsky 2013). Therefore, it is of interest to investigate to what extent (in)congruencies between political fit and a tailored political ad activate the different persuasion knowledge dimensions, which in turn can influence voters' attitudes, evaluations, and behavioral intentions. A low political fit in this context might occur when citizens are, for instance, targeted based on their specific interests for a political issue but when insufficient data are available about their political leaning. As a result, they might be exposed to ads from opposing political parties. This might lead to feelings of incongruence between their own party preferences and the source of the advertised content. As stated by the persuasion knowledge model (Friestad and Wright 1994), motivation to process specific information is a very important predictor for the activation of persuasion knowledge. Thus, it might be possible that political fit can act as motivator to process disclosure statements differently. Furthermore, perceived incongruence may evoke cognitive processes that aim at evaluating the appropriateness of an ad (Germelmann et al. 2020; Maheswaran and Chaiken 1991). Evaluating whether an ad is perceived as appropriate goes hand in hand with activation of the persuasion knowledge dimension of PMI. Research in this field has revealed that incongruent ads can lead to higher levels of perceived manipulative intent of an ad (Campbell 1995). Congruent ads, however, were found to evoke more positive evaluations (Germelmann et al. 2020), which could indicate that congruent ads might not automatically lead to the activation of PMI. In addition, we assume that the political fit of an ad with the recipient's political preferences might evoke more targeting knowledge. When ads are in line with recipients' party preferences, it might become more salient that targeting strategies were applied. Conversely, seeing an ad from a party that does not fit recipients' party preferences might bring people to the conclusion that these ads were not tailored specifically to them:

H3: A high political fit leads to **(a)** lower levels of PMI and **(b)** higher levels of TK, as compared to a low political fit.

In a commercial context, studies found that targeting leads to more negative effects if participants perceive an inconsistency between themselves and the sender of the message (Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015b; van Doorn and Hoekstra 2013). In a political context, Hersh and Schaffner (2013) found that voters prefer broad political appeals over tailored ones and that political campaigns risk being penalized when they mistarget individuals. Based on these studies, we would expect that targeted political ads from an individual's favored political party would reduce the negative effects of the targeted ad in the sense that they evoke less resistance. However, to our knowledge, no study has investigated the effects of degree of targeting

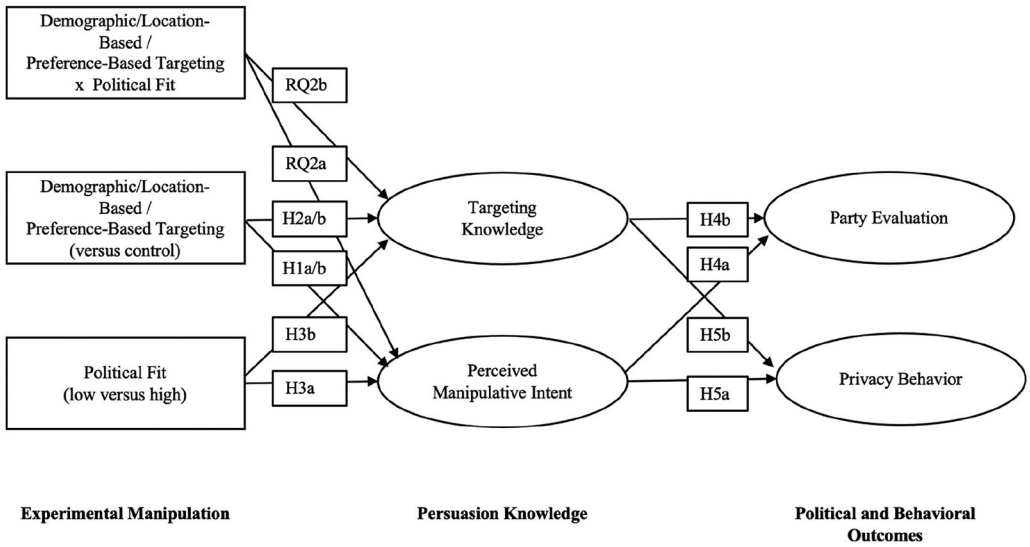

Figure 1. Hypothesized effects.

disclosure along with political fit of the sender of the message in one study, so we refrain from formulating a hypothesis and propose a research question instead:

> **RQ2:** How does the political fit moderate the effect of the degree of targeting disclosure on **(a)** PMI and **(b)** TK?

Effects on Party Evaluation and Privacy Behavior

While debates on Brexit and U.S. presidential elections suggest that targeted advertising practices can have a decisive effect on election outcomes (Lewis and Hilder 2018), scientific evidence on this issue is still scarce. Field experiments so far have observed no or only limited effects of targeted online messages designed to increase voter turnout or influence election choice (Broockman and Green 2014; Haenschen and Jennings 2019). One recent study by Zarouali and colleagues (2020) found that successfully tailored political ads (i.e., [in]congruent with personality traits) can increase the perceived persuasiveness of an ad and hence lead to more positive attitudes toward the political party and reported voting intentions. Contrasting these potentially positive effects of targeted advertising for political parties, studies suggest that once PMI is activated, recipients will react with increased resistance toward the ad and the agent (Campbell and Kirmani 2008; van Reijmersdal et al. 2016). In addition, citizens are skeptical about the online use of their data and tend to say that the risks outweigh the benefits (Auxier et al. 2019). Therefore, the recognition of targeting practices—that is, the activation of TK—might backfire on the evaluations of a party that uses such practices. As posed by Friestad and Wright (1994), as a response to the use of a new tactic, recipients "may sense that their existing agent attitudes are either unformed, outdated, or irrelevant as a guide to how they should feel about the marketer in the future" (p. 9). Thus, new practices might negatively reflect on the agent. Therefore, we would expect that the activation of PMI and TK negatively affects party evaluation:

> **H4: (a)** Higher levels of PMI and **(b)** higher levels TK lead to a more negative party evaluation.

In addition to party evaluations, behavioral consequences in the context of targeted advertising, specifically protecting online data using privacy protection behaviors, become increasingly important. Privacy-related topics in general, such as privacy concerns and feelings of privacy intrusions, are of special interest when discussing targeted advertising (e.g., Dobber et al. 2019; Zarouali, Verdoodt, et al. 2020). Privacy as a concept encompasses many dimensions; important in this context, however, is the interplay between the "balancing of normative and individual interests" (Laufer and Wolfe 1977, p. 37). This aspect also involves feelings of being in control of and losing control of situations that are connected to privacy issues (Laufer and Wolfe 1977). One prominent concept is privacy calculus. The privacy calculus model describes the trade-off between the risks and benefits of using online services or social networking sites (Culnan and Armstrong 1999; Krasnova et al. 2010).

Translated to the context of targeted advertising and to this study, benefits might be perceived as the usefulness of receiving advertising matching personal preferences or interests, on one hand (e.g., Barocas 2012; Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015b, 2015a), while risks

are likely to be connected to issues around data protection and privacy concerns (e.g., Dobber et al. 2019; Zarouali et al. 2019), on the other hand. Perceived risks in this context might even backfire and in consequence lead to strong feelings of "personalization reactance," which was defined as "psychological resistance to subjectively inappropriate personalization" (White et al. 2008, p. 40). Such reactions might be accentuated when the purpose of the advertising is not perceived as appropriate and justified (White et al. 2008). This might be especially the case when, i.e., levels of PMI and TK are high.

In this regard, previous research has investigated the relationship between targeted advertising and social media users' changes in regulatory or preventive/protective behaviors in a commercial context (Zarouali et al. 2019; Zarouali, Verdoodt, et al. 2020). Furthermore, an analytical review showed that overall knowledge can be an important predictor of privacy protection behaviors. However, the authors also concluded that it seems important to distinguish between different knowledge dimensions (Baruh, Secinti, and Cemalcilar 2017). To advance this strain of research also in the field of targeted political advertising, we aim to shed light on the relationship between targeted political advertising, the persuasion knowledge that is evoked through such ads and the handling of privacy issues in terms of privacy protection behaviors. Based on the current empirical evidence, we hypothesize the following:

H5: (a) Higher levels of PMI and **(b)** higher levels TK lead to a higher intention on privacy behaviors.

For an overview of our conceptual model, see Figure 1.

Method

Research Design

The experimental design employed a 3 (disclosure statement: preference-based targeting versus demographic/location-based targeting versus no targeting) × 2 (political fit: low political fit versus high political fit) between-subject experimental study. The first factor represents the degree of perceived targeting: Either participants were exposed to no targeting statement, a targeting description stating that posts would be shown to participants based on their demographics (age, gender) and location (e.g., residence; i.e., demographic/location-based targeting), or a targeting description stating that posts would be shown to participants based on their demographics (age, gender), location (e.g., residence), and their specific interests (i.e., preference-based targeting). Thus, this study did not focus on actual targeting but on manipulating the degree of perceived targeting with a disclosure statement. This seems very important since former studies conclude that not actual targeting but perceived targeting determines message effects (Li 2016).

The second factor concerned the sender of the message: Participants were randomly exposed to political ads on Facebook by either the conservative party ÖVP or the environmental party Die Grünen. The conservative party and the environmental party were chosen based on preexisting data on party preferences from a quota-based survey conducted in late September 2019, two months prior to the experiment ($N = 536$). The parties were selected on the basis of two criteria. First, both parties exhibited a balanced distribution of preferences, with a median of 4 for the environmental party (IQR = 1–8) and a median of 5 for the conservative party (IQR = 1–8). Second, the parties appeal to different shares of the electorate as reflected in a negative correlation coefficient of party preferences, $r\ (534) = -0.23$, $p < .001$. Therefore, participants from different ideological leanings had a similar chance of receiving an ad with low or high political fit. All participants received a detailed debriefing after the study, in which the intention of the study as well as the manipulation were explained.

Sample

Participants were recruited by a professional data collection company in December 2019. We used a quota sample based on the distribution of age and gender in Austria. A total number of $N = 430$ participants took part in this study ($M_{age} = 41.42$, $SD = 13.13$). Education was diverse but not fully in line with the quota (50.2% were women; 31.6% completed low education, 39.8% middle education, and 28.6% high education).

Stimulus

Prior to exposure, we asked participants about demographics, their interests about different topics, and their reactions toward certain Facebook posts from their friends, family, or colleagues, as well as questions on how much time they usually spend with their family, friends, and colleagues. All those questions were asked to later give participants the feeling that they saw posts based on the data they previously shared in the questionnaire. In a subsequent step, participants were randomly assigned to the different degrees of

Table 1. Effects of persuasion knowledge, experimental conditions, and controls using structural equation modeling.

	Persuasion Knowledge			Outcomes	
Predictors	Perc. persuasive intent *b* (SE)	TK *b* (SE)	PMI *b* (SE)	Party evaluation *b* (SE)	Privacy behavior *b* (SE)
Persuasion knowledge					
TK			−0.35***(0.06)	0.17***(0.04)	0.15**(0.05)
PMI				−0.53***(0.05)	0.23***(0.06)
Perc. persuasive intent		0.13*(0.05)	−0.30***(0.05)	−0.20**(0.04)	−0.07(0.06)
Experimental Conditions					
Dem./Loc. Targeting[a]	0.32(0.25)	−0.05(0.24)	−0.19(0.23)	−0.17(0.17)	0.17(0.22)
Pref. Targeting[a]	0.26(0.26)	0.43(0.26)	−0.12(0.23)	−0.10(0.18)	0.04(0.21)
Fit[a]	0.08(0.28)	0.79**(0.26)	−1.07***(0.24)	0.62**(0.20)	0.00(0.21)
Dem. Targeting:Fit	−0.13(0.37)	0.47(0.37)	0.41(0.36)	0.33(0.28)	−0.14(0.31)
Pref. Targeting:Fit	0.35(0.36)	−0.09(0.40)	0.44(0.35)	0.05(0.25)	0.15(0.30)
Control Variables					
Age	0.00(0.01)	−0.02*(0.01)	0.01*(0.01)	−0.01(0.00)	−0.01(0.01)
Gender[a] (female =1)	0.63***(0.15)	−0.11(0.17)	−0.17 (0.15)	0.10(0.11)	−0.21(0.15)
High education[a]	0.33(0.20)	−0.47*(0.21)	0.07(0.19)	0.09(0.16)	0.10(0.19)
Intermediate education[a]	−0.03(0.19)	−0.12(0.20)	0.22(0.19)	−0.01(0.14)	0.12(0.18)
Facebook use	−0.03(0.06)	0.06(0.06)	−0.01(0.05)	0.02(0.05)	−0.01(0.05)
Privacy concern	0.20***(0.06)	0.04(0.06)	0.07(0.05)	0.02(0.04)	0.37***(0.06)
Family importance	0.02(0.05)	0.23***(0.05)	0.02(0.05)	−0.08*(0.04)	−0.03(0.05)
R^2	0.12	0.19	0.36	0.60	0.26

[a]Marked variables are coded using indicator coding; *SE* were calculated using bootstrap technique with 5,000 samples;
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; Fit measures of the total model: $\chi 2(588) = 967.14$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .039, SRMR = .044

targeting disclosures, namely no targeting (i.e., participants were informed that they would see random Facebook posts), demographic/location-based targeting (i.e., participants were informed that they would see Facebook posts based on prior algorithmic analysis of their demographic data), and preference-based targeting (i.e., participants were informed that they would see Facebook posts that were tailored based on prior analysis of their demographic data and their interests on the topic around family). The original Facebook disclosure icons and information windows were applied in this study for each political party. The Facebook disclosure windows were tailored to participants' age groups and gender to increase their feelings of being exposed to targeted ads. Subsequently, participants were randomly exposed to the different stimuli and filler ads in one of the six conditions. The presented stimuli consisted of three political Facebook ads with statements on the importance of family communicated by either the environmental or the conservative party. The design of the ads and the party slogans were held consistent. Means and standard deviations per condition are reported in Supplemental Online Appendix B, Table B1.

Measures

For independent variables, participants were exposed to one of three degrees of targeting disclosures, which ranged from no targeting ($n = 146$) to demographic/location-based targeting ($n = 141$) and preference-based targeting ($n = 143$). Political fit was assessed as the fit between the presented targeted ads and the participants' party preference of the respective party. For example: If one participant supported the environmental party Die Grünen and therefore indicated party preference with a value higher than 5 out of a 10-point Likert scale and was confronted with a post from this party, the fit was assessed as good. This procedure was repeated for the conservative party based on the same criteria. From these two party–ad fit variables we calculated an overall political fit variable. We dummy-coded these variables into high political fit ($n = 175$), and low political fit ($n = 255$).

All mediators were measures on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = *Do not agree at all* to 7 = *Totally agree*, unless indicated differently. Perceived persuasive intent was based on Boerman, van Reijmersdal, et al. (2018) and adapted to our context (e.g., "The goal of the posts is to give a positive image of a political party"; $\alpha = .95$, $M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.57$). PMI was derived from Campbell (1995) and rephrased to match our study (e.g., "These posts try to convince people without being manipulative" (reversed); $\alpha = .94$, $M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.64$). TK was derived from Aguirre et al. (2015) and Dijkstra (2005) also adapted to our topic (e.g., "These posts are tailored to me"; $\alpha = .92$, $M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.67$).

For dependent variables, we measured privacy behavior based on former research in this research area (Park 2013; Young and Quan-Haase 2013) and adapted these measures as well as extended them to the context of targeting. Participants were asked how likely it was that they would engage with various

privacy behaviors (1 = *Very unlikely*; 7 = *Very likely*). Participants were asked to evaluate five measures, such as "I will change social media settings to hide all ads from this political party" ($\alpha = .83$, $M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.57$). We assessed participants' party evaluation based on Ahluwalia (2000) by asking participants to what extent they agreed (1 = *Do not agree at all*; 7 = *Totally agree*) to five adjectives describing the party for which they just saw the targeted ad (e.g., "Cares about people like me"; $\alpha = .95$, $M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.59$).

We controlled for participants' demographics (i.e., age, gender, education level) and Facebook usage in terms of how long participants use this social media platform a day on a 7-point Likert scale ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.40$). In addition, we controlled for privacy concerns measured with three items (e.g., "It is important for me to know what an organization does with my personal information") on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Do not agree at all*; 7 = *Totally agree*; Miyazaki 2008; $\alpha = .93$, $M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.65$). Furthermore, participants were asked on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Not important at all*; 7 = *Very important*) to what extent family played an important role in their lives ($M = 5.88$, $SD = 1.49$).

For an overview of the measures and the stimuli, see Supplemental Online Appendix A.

Manipulation and Randomization Checks

To test if the manipulation of perceived targeting was successful, we used two different indices: First, to measure low targeting, individuals indicated in three separate items how strongly they agreed that the presented posts were shown to them based on (1) their age, (2) their gender, and (3) their residence ($\alpha = .82$, $M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.70$). Manipulation was successful: Individuals in the demographic/location-based targeting disclosure ($M_{\text{difference}} = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$) and in the preference-based targeting disclosure group ($M_{\text{difference}} = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$) showed significantly higher levels as compared to the control group, F (427) = 10.65, $p < .001$. Next, individuals indicated if they were presented with the respective political posts (1) based on their clicking behavior and (2) based on the information they provided about their interest in family issues. The values of the two items were averaged into an index for preference-based targeting ($\alpha = .77$, $M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.70$). Individuals in the preference-based targeting disclosure group showed higher levels as compared to the control ($M_{\text{difference}} = 0.62$, $p = 0.01$) and the demographic/location-based targeting disclosure group ($M_{\text{difference}} = 0.50$, $p = 0.04$), F (427) = 6.81, $p = .001$. Therefore, participants were able to recall the information of the disclosure statement correctly. Thus, they showed different degrees of perceived targeting. Participants also correctly identified the party they had seen, χ^2 (3, $N = 430$) = 363.06, $p < 0.001$; 93.27% correct answers in conservative group, 90.82% correct answers in environmental party group.

Randomization checks were successful (gender: $\chi^2 = 4.02$, $df = 5$, $p = .546$; age: F (1, 428) = 0.18, $p = .670$; education: $\chi^2 = 5.72$, $df = 10$, $p = .838$; Facebook use: F (1, 428) = 0.13, $p = .722$; privacy concerns: F (1, 428) = 0.90, $p = .344$; importance of family: F (1, 428) = 0.01, $p = .930$).

Results

We turned to structural equation modeling using the lavaan package in R (Rosseel 2012). In a two-step procedure, we first examined the accuracy of our measurement model, followed by a test of the full model including the theorized paths. The initial measurement model was bordering acceptable fit, χ^2 (390) = 900.46, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .06. A close inspection of the item wordings, factor loadings, and possible cross-loadings suggested two items measuring privacy behaviors did not load sufficiently on the latent factor. After the exclusion of these items, the model fit improved, χ^2 (335) = 640.24, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05. In a subsequent step, the theorized paths were added to the model. The conventional indices suggest acceptable model fit, χ^2 (588) = 967.14, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .04. Because previous findings indicated that different dimensions of persuasion knowledge were positively correlated (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, et al. 2018), the latent constructs persuasive intent, manipulative intent, and targeting knowledge were allowed to covary.

We tested whether the degree of targeting disclosure activated individuals' persuasion knowledge for the dimensions of individuals' PMI (hypothesis 1) or TK (hypothesis 2; Table 1). The degree of targeting disclosure did not significantly change individuals' PMI (hypothesis 1(a), dem./loc. targeting: $b = -0.19$, $p = .403$; hypothesis 1(b), pref. targeting: $b = -0.12$, $p = .616$) or TK (hypothesis 2(a), dem./loc. targeting: $b = -0.05$, $p = .847$; hypothesis 2(b), pref. targeting: $b = 0.43$, $p = .099$). To test if the demographic- and location-based targeting disclosure exerts different

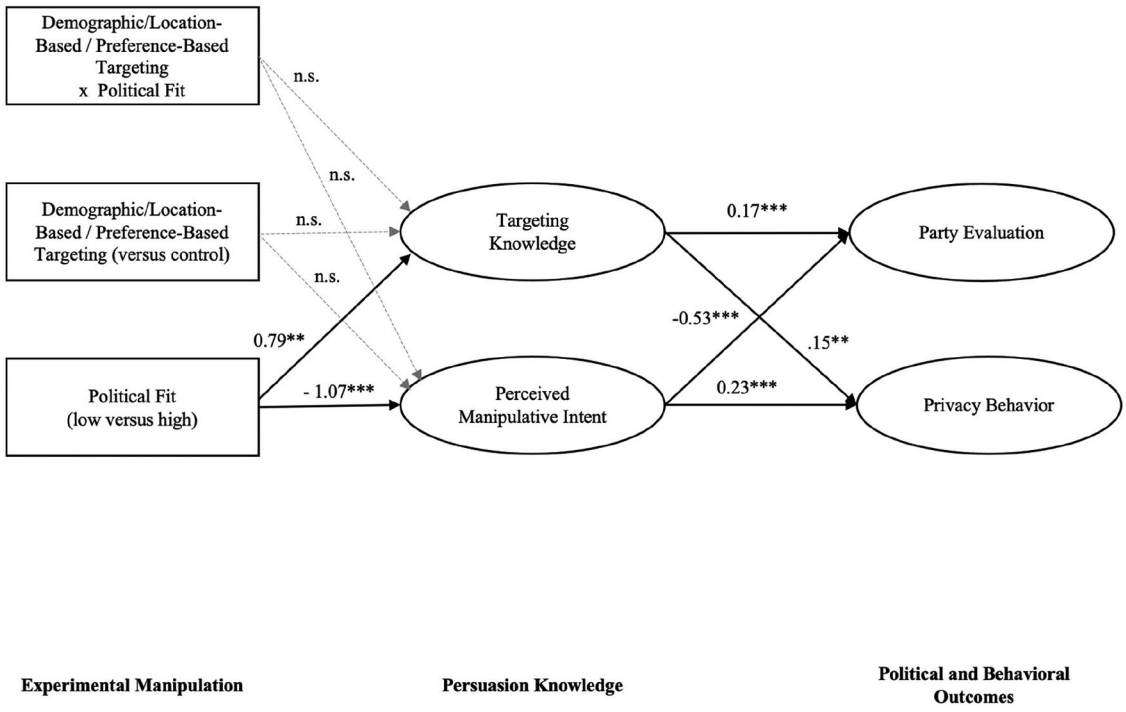

Figure 2. Visualization of hypothesized effects depicting the significant effects of political fit and degree of targeting disclosure on party evaluation and privacy behavior through different dimensions of persuasion knowlegde.

effects as compared to the preference-based targeting disclosure, we estimated a SEM model in which the paths from the experimental groups predicting PMI and TK were constrained to be equal. A model comparison with the freely estimated paths showed no significant difference between the models, $X^2(2) = 3.97$, $p = .138$, indicating that the effects of both groups on PMI and TK do not significantly differ (research question 1). There was a significant direct effect of political fit on both PMI (hypothesis 3(a), $b = -1.07$, $p < .001$) and TK (hypothesis 3(b), $b = 0.79$, $p = .003$), suggesting that the political fit increased individuals' activation of TK but lowered their perception that the ad had manipulative intent. Thus, hypotheses 1 and 2 are rejected, while hypotheses 3(a) and 3(b) are supported by our data. Investigating research question 2, political fit did not moderate the effects of perceived preference-based and demographic targeting on PMI and TK (dem./loc. targeting, interaction effect, PMI: $b = 0.46$, $p = .253$; TK: $b = 0.46$, $p = .207$; pref. targeting, interaction effect, PMI: $b = 0.44$, $p = .201$; TK: $b = -0.09$, $p = .824$).

Next, we investigated the levels of PMI and TK influence on participants' party evaluation (hypothesis 4) and privacy behaviors (hypothesis 5). There was a significant effect of PMI ($b = -0.53$, $p < .001$) as well as TK ($b = 0.17$, $p < .001$) on party evaluation, suggesting that higher levels of PMI lead to lower levels of party evaluations and higher levels of TK lead to higher levels of party evaluations. Furthermore, there was a significant effect of PMI ($b = 0.23$, $p < .001$) as well as TK ($b = 0.15$, $p = .004$) on privacy behaviors, suggesting that higher levels of PMI and higher levels of TK lead to higher levels of privacy behaviors.

Next, we tested whether the indirect paths suggested by our findings reach significance. We found support for an indirect effect of political fit on party evaluation via PMI, $b = 0.57$, $p < .001$, and TK, $b = 0.13$, $p = .024$. In addition, political fit significantly reduced privacy behavior through lower levels of PMI, $b = -0.25$, $p = .002$. However, privacy behavior was not significantly affected by an indirect effect of political fit through higher levels of TK, $b = 0.12$, $p = .052$ (see Figure 2).[1] The same pattern of results emerged from testing all hypotheses in a path model based on multiple regressions, as well as using a robust maximum likelihood estimator instead of bootstrapping.[2] Controlling for the party to which individuals were exposed in addition to the fit also did not change the pattern or results (see Table B2, Supplemental Online Appendix B).

Discussion

Two central questions guided this study: Are voters able and motivated to resist targeting practices in the political realm? Or do they accept otherwise unpopular and distrusted targeting strategies when they are

used by their favored political party? In light of increasingly sophisticated data collection of individuals' online behavior for political purposes, these questions seem more and more pressing (Dobber et al. 2019). To the best of our knowledge, this study represents the first study examining the effects of the different degrees of targeting disclosures as well as the congruence between the sender and the receiver in a political context in one experimental study.

Based on the persuasion knowledge model (Friestad and Wright 1994), we investigated whether the degree of disclosing a targeting strategy as well as political fit between the party sending the message and the receiver influence participants' activation of persuasion knowledge. Surprisingly, neither a low degree of targeting disclosure (i.e., demographic/location-based targeting disclosure) nor a high degree of targeting disclosure (i.e., preference-based targeting disclosure) activated individuals' persuasion knowledge in regard to PMI or TK.

One may argue that the manipulation was too weak. In our manipulation, individuals were presented with the exact statement which Facebook uses to inform individuals about the targeting criteria of an ad, such as demographics and specific preferences of the receiver. Notably, participants could successfully indicate the types of data that were used to target them in a manipulation check, such as their gender and their indicated preferences, which were presented to them in the Facebook statement. If the manipulation had failed due to inattentiveness on the side of the participants, it would be unlikely that respondents would answer these questions correctly. It is more likely that participants had difficulties seeing the manipulative intent behind those practices, because targeting is still a difficult concept for many people (Dobber et al. 2019). If users do not have adequate preexisting knowledge, they are not able to activate this knowledge when exposed to targeted ads because they do not know what it entails, although they were fully aware that they were targeted with a political ad. Consequently, the statement used in Facebook to inform individuals about targeting might not act as a sufficient disclosure, as it was unable to activate persuasion knowledge.

Even though the degree of the targeting disclosure did not have an effect, targeting knowledge, that is, activated persuasion knowledge about targeting practices, was positively correlated with party evaluation and individuals' privacy behaviors. This positive effect brings up important questions. Considering the high levels of rejection of targeting tactics in the general population (Auxier et al. 2019), a negative effect would have seemed likely. One possible explanation for this unexpected effect is that our measurement was based on the recognition of targeting. Going beyond recognition, the persuasion knowledge model suggests that persuasion knowledge also entails beliefs about how certain strategies might influence recipients, which motives lie behind them, and which exact psychological leverages are used in the persuasion attempt. Thus, the positive response to recognizing targeting might stem from the lack of knowledge in these specific knowledge areas. To fully resolve this question, further improvements in our measurements are needed in future studies, using items that also reflect an inference of the advertisers' motives and psychological mediators that are inferred by the recipients. Such scales should build on qualitative research to ensure that they capture a wide variety of beliefs. Nevertheless, recognition-based items can also be insightful, as recognition constitutes the first necessary step in the activation of a variety of persuasion knowledge dimensions. Furthermore, the positive effect on party evaluation might be due to the fact that targeted messages might seem more relevant to individuals (Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015a, 2015b).

In regard to the effects of political fit, TK increased when individuals received a campaign ad from a party they favored—in other words, when there was high political fit between the sender and receiver of the message. This means that there is a positive effect in showing campaign ads on Facebook to party supporters in general because individuals activate their knowledge about targeting for like-minded parties. Simultaneously, individuals find the ads less manipulative when they come from parties they favor. Both the increase in TK and the reduction in PMI positively affect party evaluations as compared to poor-fit political campaign ads. In comparison, parties that reach out to voters whose political preferences are not in line with the political orientation of the party do not profit from the positive effects of TK on party evaluations and are seen as more manipulative, which negatively impacts party evaluation.

However, we did not find any interaction effects of the degree of targeting disclosure and political fit on participants' PMI or TK. As described, the disclosure statements per se did not act as an indicator for the activation of participants' persuasion knowledge. The effects of political fit on participants' persuasion knowledge were not affected by disclosure statements. In sum, reaching out to the party's own voters via targeted ads has positive effects: Political fit increases TK

and its consequent positive impact on party evaluation, while it also decreases PMI, which in turn positively affects party evaluation. This might be due to more elaboration when persuasion knowledge about targeting is activated (Wheeler, Petty, and Bizer 2005). Because this happens only for individuals who evaluate the party positively, more positive thoughts might be activated when individuals elaborate on the message.

We also looked at the consequences of the degree of disclosing a targeting strategy for individuals' future privacy behavior. We found that individuals increase their privacy behavior intentions as a response to targeted political advertising when ads are not fitting their party preferences via higher levels of PMI. When parties target voters that do not yet have positive preexisting attitudes toward the party, further attempts to reach such voters might be blocked. Thus, low political fit is sanctioned (Bleier and Eisenbeiss 2015b; van Doorn and Hoekstra 2013).

In terms of practical implications, the results of this study showed that the current disclosure used on Facebook may not be sufficient to activate persuasion knowledge among all social media users. In other words, showing a disclosure does not affect PMI nor TK. Only the sender of the message per se is able to activate persuasion knowledge. Even though social media users are only able to see this statement on Facebook if they actively press the button "Why am I seeing this ad?", it seems alarming that even forced exposure to this statement does not contribute to higher levels of persuasion knowledge. This might be due to the fact that targeting is a complex construct and difficult for social media users to understand (Dobber et al. 2019). Thus, further research is needed to investigate how disclosure statements should look to inform social media users about targeting strategies.

This study is not without limitations. First, although we employed strict randomization, we did not examine prior TK or experiences. Future studies should investigate what the effects of targeting ads in a political context look like when taking prior knowledge into account. It might be possible that we were not able to activate persuasion knowledge because people do have limited experiences with persuasive targeted attempts in a political context. Indeed, prior studies suggest that especially negative experiences with data misuse are drivers for privacy behaviors (Boerman, Kruikemeier, et al. 2018). Second, future studies should focus on how a knowledge intervention for targeted ads should look. In our study, we used the actual and therefore externally valid disclosure statement from Facebook, reflecting the current practice. Thus, we also did not explicitly state that in the high targeting disclosure condition the data were analyzed to arrive at the conclusion that a person has a high interest in the topic "family". Further research should therefore use more detailed disclosures to investigate if this additional information could lead to other effects.

Third, it is of interest to further investigate the effects of other targeting strategies in terms of fit, such as issue-based targeting. Some studies have already addressed the influence of the issue fit of targeted ads on participants' reactions and attitudes (e.g., Holman, Schneider, and Pondel 2015; Endres 2020). Future studies should build on these studies by testing the effects of more controversial topics as well as combining the congruency of the sender of the message (i.e., political party) and the issue fit of a topic displayed in an ad.

Fourth, our measure of targeting knowledge gauged only individuals' recognition of the practice of targeting. This is a necessary precondition for activating subsequent knowledge structures but does not give us insights into individuals' knowledge about how targeting activates psychological mechanisms that drive persuasion (Friestad and Wright 1994). Future studies should therefore investigate the beliefs individuals hold about how targeted messages influence recipients. Fifth, while this study builds on important dimensions of the persuasion knowledge model, the theory explicated additional factors that might influence the persuasive outcome, such as individuals' agent knowledge and their target knowledge, that is, knowledge about the presented content. With regard to persuasion knowledge, future studies could investigate additional knowledge structures, such as beliefs about coping tactics and tactic effectiveness. Finally, we manipulated different degrees of targeting disclosures as one way to test the effects of targeted political ads. This manipulation is externally valid because it is currently used on Facebook. It is also internally valid for a manipulation of targeting perceptions. Yet on Facebook such disclosures appear only if users click on a link that shows additional information. Thus, we have employed a forced exposure design. Forced exposure designs, while common in experimental research, are limited because they do not account for selective exposure. Other studies have used different experimental paradigms, for instance, targeting individuals based on previously assessed personality traits (e.g., Zarouali, Dobber, et al. 2020). While both approaches come with limitations, they use different experimental logics and are therefore both necessary.

Conclusion

Our study was the first to demonstrate the influence of different degrees of targeting disclosures and political fit in an externally valid experiment. We believe that our findings bear great relevance for the understanding of how perceived political targeted ads may influence social media users. Our findings suggest that not the degree of targeting disclosures but the political fit of the sender and the receiver is the main driver for the effectiveness of targeted political ads. Providing social media users with targeted ads does not harm the political party in case of political fit. However, a low perceived fit can lead to lower party evaluation via higher manipulative intent and lower targeting knowledge. One might conclude that targeting from disliked parties is sanctioned by social media users. However, more research is needed to verify this statement.

Notes

1. One item ("I will change social media settings to hide all ads from this political party") which also loaded on the variable privacy behaviors might be conceptually classified as ad avoidance. Therefore, we conducted additional analyses excluding this item. The results do not change if the item is omitted from the analyses. In addition, the indirect effect of fit on privacy behaviors via PMI, $b = -0.22$, $p = .006$, and via TK, $b = 0.13$, $p = .053$, show the same pattern as compared to the prior analyses.
2. For additional analysis see this OSF-Link: https://osf.io/8p54x/?view_only=94afc7844187488d98484596fe9429d2

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