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Published online: 13 Nov 2019.

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Emotionale Framing-Effekte auf Einstellungen. Eine theoretische Modellierung und empirische Überprüfung der Wirkungsmechanismen [Emotional framing effects on attitudes. A theoretical modelling and empirical verification of the mechanisms of operation], by Rinaldo Kühne, Baden-Baden, Nomos, Reihe Rezeptionsforschung Series (Book 33), 2015, 417 p., $119, ISBN-13: 978-3848718733

Rinaldo Kühne's book originates from a dissertation that was submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zurich in 2014 and was published in 2015. Although it does not represent the latest state of research in terms of time, it is of great value in a special issue on post-truth which seeks to reveal both the mechanism of the action of emotions as they are triggered by information and the influence of these triggered emotions on the attitudes of recipients, by presenting the mutual relationship between cognition and emotion on the basis of frames theory.

For the journal *Church, Communication and Culture,* it is also relevant insofar as the present work was produced at the Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research at the University of Zurich as part of a larger project on Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century, and the empirical analysis was carried out on the basis of media frames. So much for the legitimation of this review.

The author proceeds cautiously with terminology and always bases his statements on the abundant research, which he has studied in depth. First, he makes a distinction between frames and framing. Frames are the result of a process of selection. Both transmitters and receivers have frames in mind, and these frames are different at various times throughout the process of political communication. Framing, on the other hand, refers to the process in which a communicator highlights and links certain aspects of a topic and thus creates a textual frame.

In the field of media, media frames are textual patterns of interpretation that highlight and consistently link certain aspects of social themes. These interpretations are not purely cognitive, but also emotional. Cognitive processes could be described as being based on changes in the accessibility, importance and content of the recipient's ideas. Emotional processes arise when emotions, for example anger or sadness, are triggered. The important point for the analysis of post-truth is that both processes shape the attitude of the recipients by causing them to think or feel that punishment or remedial measures are necessary.

This strong effect of framing goes back to the basic principles of frames, namely selection, consistency and ambivalence. As the name itself suggests, frames only focus on certain aspects of a phenomenon. But these aspects are tightly interlinked so that they do not allow for contradictions, and clearly point to the need for action. In the ambivalence and complexity of some themes, the frames show patterns of interpretation that exist in the minds of both the sender and the recipient.

Frames relate not only to the content, but also to the form of the message. Therefore, a distinction is made between content-related and formal-stylistic frames, depending on whether they focus on content or presentation.

As far as the cognitive and content-related aspects of framing are concerned, Kühne sums up the research well by explaining the steps of priming: first, a stimulus activates certain units of knowledge or ideas in the memory of recipients. These activated knowledge units influence subsequent processing and judgement processes. In judgment formation, the information used is that which is currently most accessible or easiest to retrieve. It should be noted here which spaces of influence or manipulation open up, because in the knowledge of current ways of thinking there is power to select the frames that will have the desired effect.

Based on these insights into the cognitive effects of framing, Kühne's explanations can be well understood. How is emotion triggered? This is how it happens in media reception: If the central organizing idea of a news article matches the core relational theme of an emotion, then the emotion is triggered. What is decisive for illuminating the topic of post-truth, however, is that emotions are associated with specific effects on judgement formation processes. The bases for this are the cognitive schemata of the recipients, because the activation effects of emotions presuppose that memory content or cognitive schemata on a topic are available to be activated. For this reason, emotional framing effects are likely to be more pronounced in topics about which the recipients have a great deal of prior knowledge or pronounced schemata. In political reporting it can be said that political preconceptions and predispositions influence what kind of emotions are triggered and how intense the emotional reactions will be.

With regard to the effect of formal stylistic frames, the thesis put forward is that episodic frames trigger stronger emotions than thematic frames. The representation of case studies and experiences of individual persons is therefore more emotionally involved than the representation of background information. And these emotions exert specific influences on information processing and judgement formation. Based on the relevant research, Kühne can therefore claim that, according to cognitive assessment theories, media frames are likely to influence how certain aspects of a topic are highlighted and linked, how the topic is cognitively evaluated, and which emotions are triggered.

On the basis of appraisal theory, Kühne also shows the creative side of framing, as new assessments are generated by drawing on existing knowledge rather than merely activating existing assessments. Here the confirmation effect plays an important role (which can also be assessed in advance by the transmitter). This is the case when some interpretations that correspond to certain estimation patterns are perceived as correct. In this case, emotions function as mediators of framing effects as well as insights. It can therefore be said that certain content elements of media frames influence which emotions are triggered.

In summary, it can be said that the frame components can be translated into assessments via automatic and rather unconscious activation processes or via active and conscious reflection processes. If these processes result in an emotion-specific assessment pattern, then corresponding emotions are triggered.

With regard to post-truth, one can therefore assume the following: Since the goal of framing is to initiate certain actions, and emotions are a means to achieve this goal, frames may often be designed to activate emotion-specific estimation patterns and thus exert a strong influence on the attitudes of the recipients.

The theoretical explanations are supported by experiments described in the second part of the book, with the author concentrating mainly on the emotions of anger and sadness and their influence on the attitudes of the recipients. This empirical part takes place both in the laboratory and in the public debate over a longer period of time. In the first case, subjects are presented with an article on increasing road safety measures to reduce the number of road deaths. The second experiment tracks the impact of media coverage of

unemployment in the United Kingdom. In both cases the experiment is about specific media representation of complex models of aggressor and victim. The central question is what influence these media frames have on the attitude of the recipients, i.e. whether there is a clear correlation between anger and the preference for punitive measures as well as a correlation between sadness and the preference for relief measures.

The hypotheses were confirmed. The following correlations were found: The causer frame increased the assessment of personal responsibility, this increased the anger and anger increased the consent to punitive measures. The victim frame also worked: it increased the assessment of situational causation, which increased sadness, and this supported consent to relief measures.

To me, the most important finding of this study is the overcoming of a position frequently held in frame research, but also in communication research, that the emotionalizing components must be added to the cognitive effect of a frame. In Kühne's work, the old anthropological knowledge about human rationality becomes visible again, according to which emotions are not "extras", but are an integral part of the human being, and emotion and cognition interact accordingly in political life.

Applied to the theme of this special issue, it means that post-truth effects do not need to be staged specifically, but that moods can be created solely by the choice of words, the frequency of their use and the establishment of a relationship to the existing *zeitgeist* [spirit of the times].

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