Who ‘likes’ populists? Characteristics of adolescents following right-wing populist actors on Facebook

# Details

## DOI

10.1080/1369118x.2017.1328524

## Issued

2017

## Language

English

## Volume

20

## Issue

9

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Heiss R.;Matthes J.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Information, Communication Society

## Publisher

Informa UK Limited

## Topics

* Learning
* Literacy and skills
* Content-related issues
* Digital and socio-cultural environment
* Researching children online: methodology and ethics

## Sample

A paper–pencil survey (N = 294) of 15–20-year-old school students was implemented.

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Awareness for the needs of the younger generation

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Past research has primarily focused on the positive potential of Social Network Sites (SNS) for democratic citizenship. However, SNS have also become key territories for right-wing populist actors (RWPA). Yet we almost completely lack research on adolescents’ use of SNS in the context of political populism. In this study, we draw a profile of adolescents who follow RWPA on Facebook incorporating three key predictors: political trust, personality traits as measured by the Big Five, as well as motivations to use SNS. A paper–pencil survey (N = 294) of 15–20-year-old school students was implemented. In line with hypotheses, we found that followers of RWPA scored low on political trust, informational motivations to use SNS, and the personality trait openness, but scored high on extraversion and participatory motivations to use SNS. In demographic terms, we found some evidence that lower educated and male students were more likely to follow RWPA. The important role of cognitive engagement with political information for the quality of participation on SNS is discussed.

# Outcome

"In line with hypotheses, we found that followers of RWPA scored low on political trust, informational motivations to use SNS, and the personality trait openness, but scored high on extraversion and participatory motivations to use SNS. In demographic terms, we found some evidence that lower educated and male students were more likely to follow RWPA. The important role of cognitive engagement with political information for the quality of participation on SNS is discussed." (Heiss/Matthes, 2017, 1408)