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CONSPIRACY THEORIES, MEDIA CYNICISM AND POLITICAL RADICALIZATION FINDINGS FROM GERMANY

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Symposium "Conspiracy Theories and Radical Politics",
COST Action "Comparative Analysis of Conspiracy Theories",
Tuebingen, 28-30 July 2017



Source: dpa

BACKGROUND: POLITICAL RADICALIZATION AND DEBATES ON A “LYING PRESS” IN GERMANY



Sources: dpa

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Sources: dpa

„Lying Press“-Believers = Tinfoil Hat-Wearers?



Source: Ordercrazy (2016): TinFoilHat. Made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:30C3_TinFoil-Hat_02.jpg, 20. June 2016.

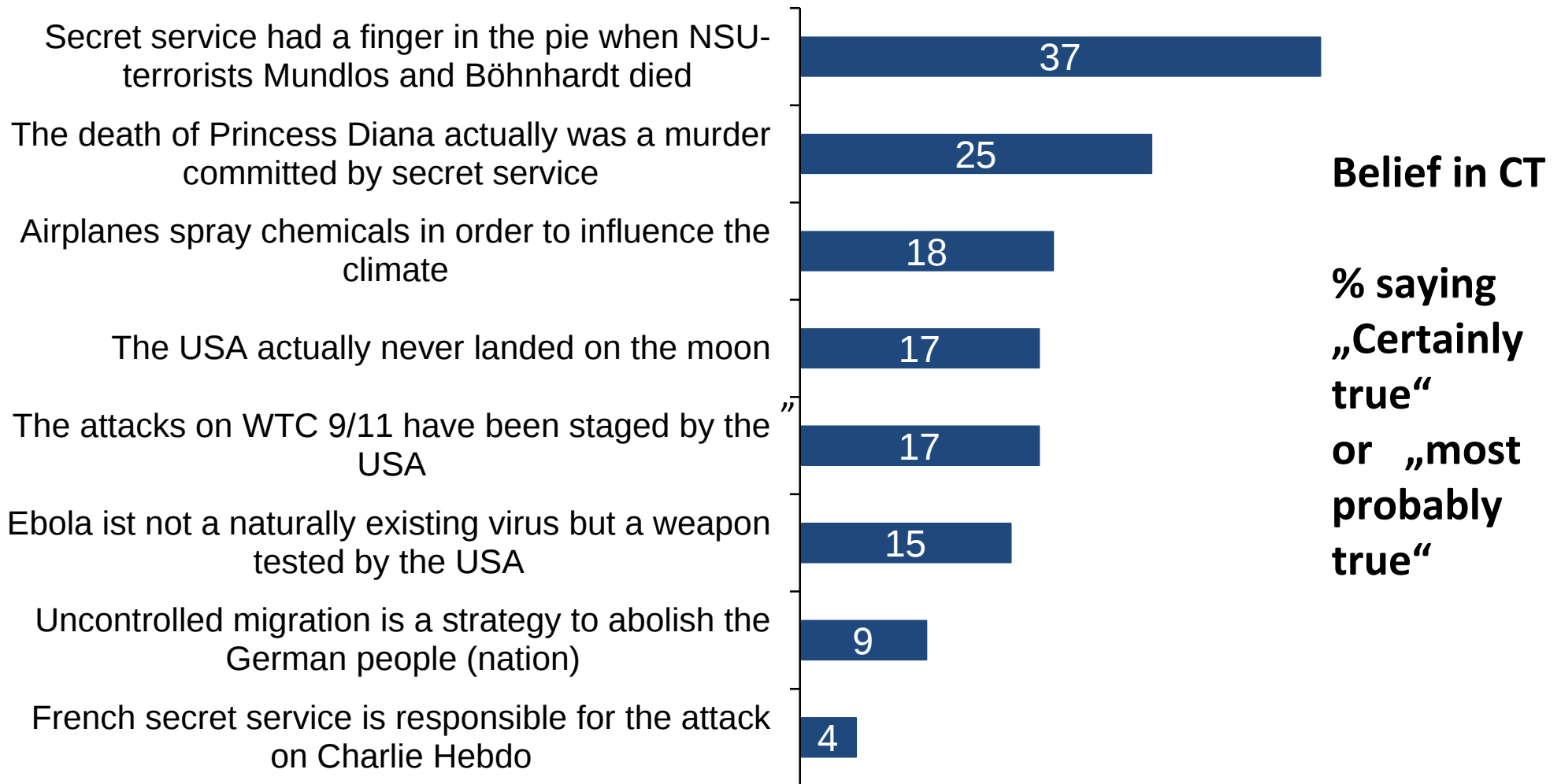
Questions

- » RQ 1: A) How widespread are CT in Germany? B) How widespread is media cynicism in Germany?
- » RQ 2: Is there an association between belief in CT and media cynicism / trust in media?
- » RQ 3: A) Are believers of CT and people who are cynical about the media also radical in their political views? B) What are general characteristics of believers in CT?

Method

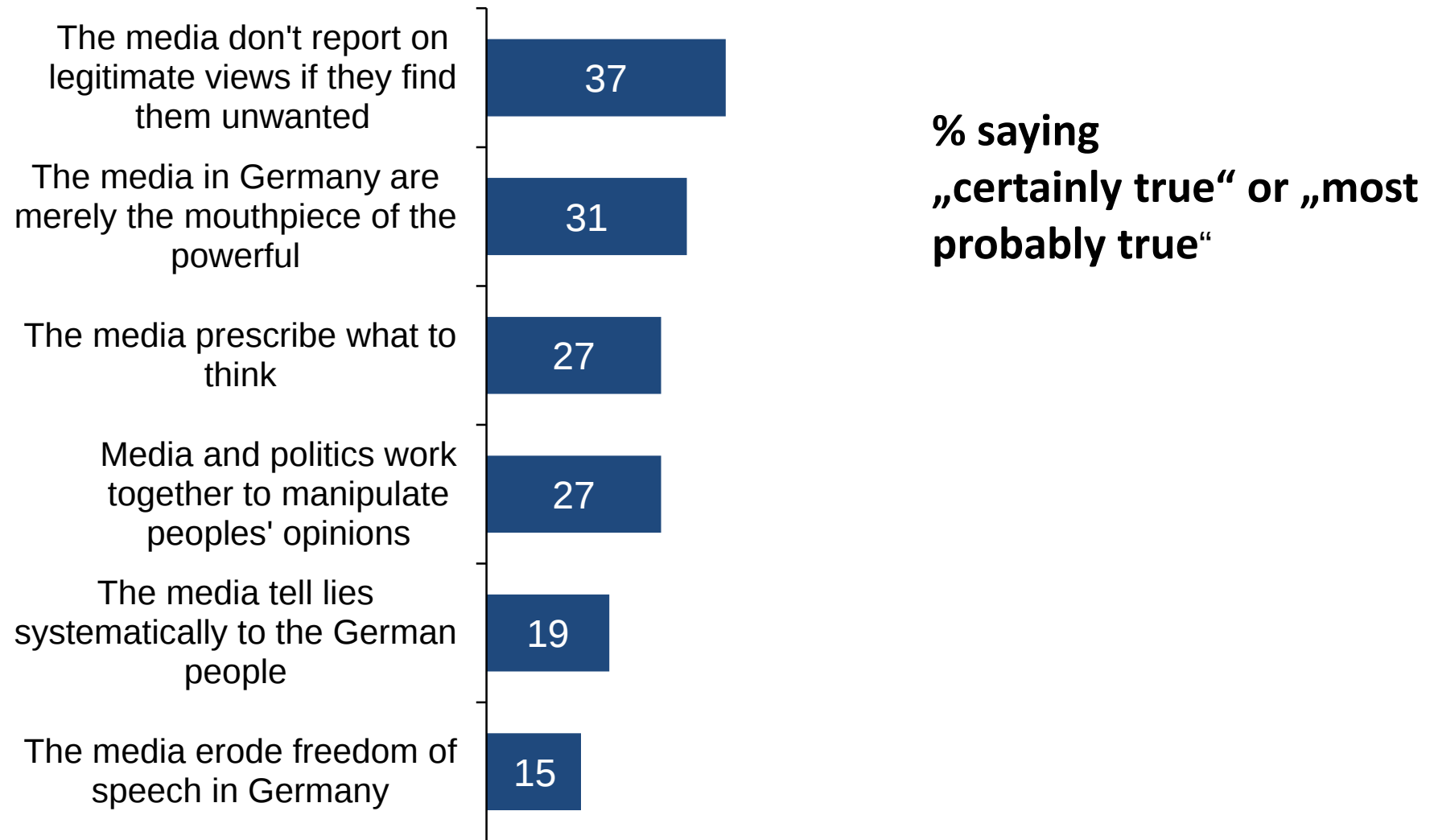
- » Representative survey (telephone), fall 2016

RQ1: A) HOW WIDESPREAD ARE CT IN GERMANY?

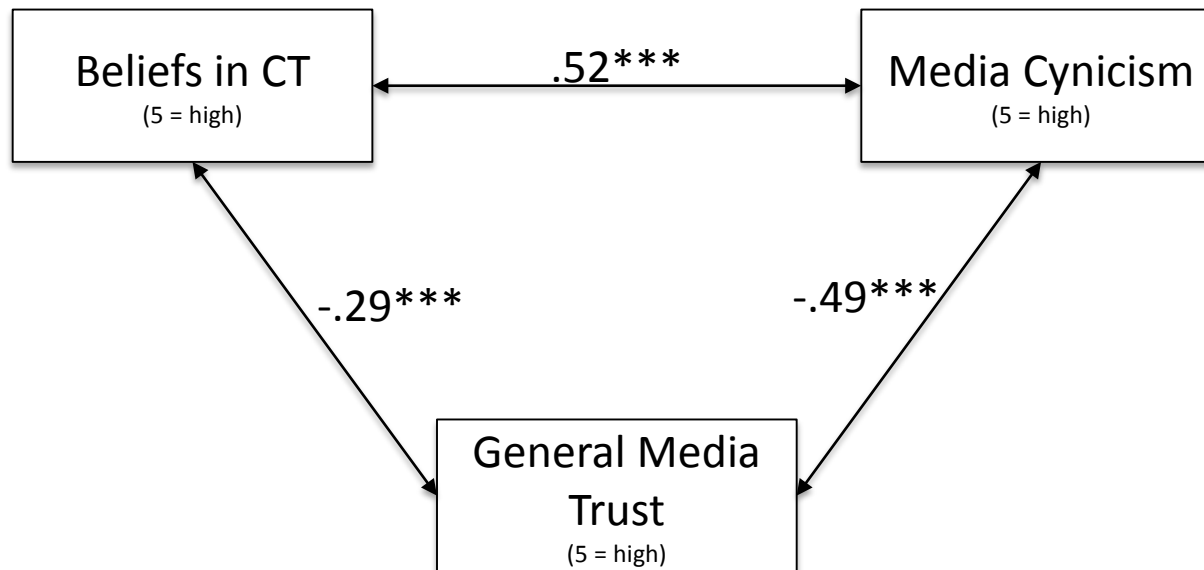


N=1 200

RQ 1: B) HOW WIDESPREAD IS MEDIA CYNICISM IN GERMANY?

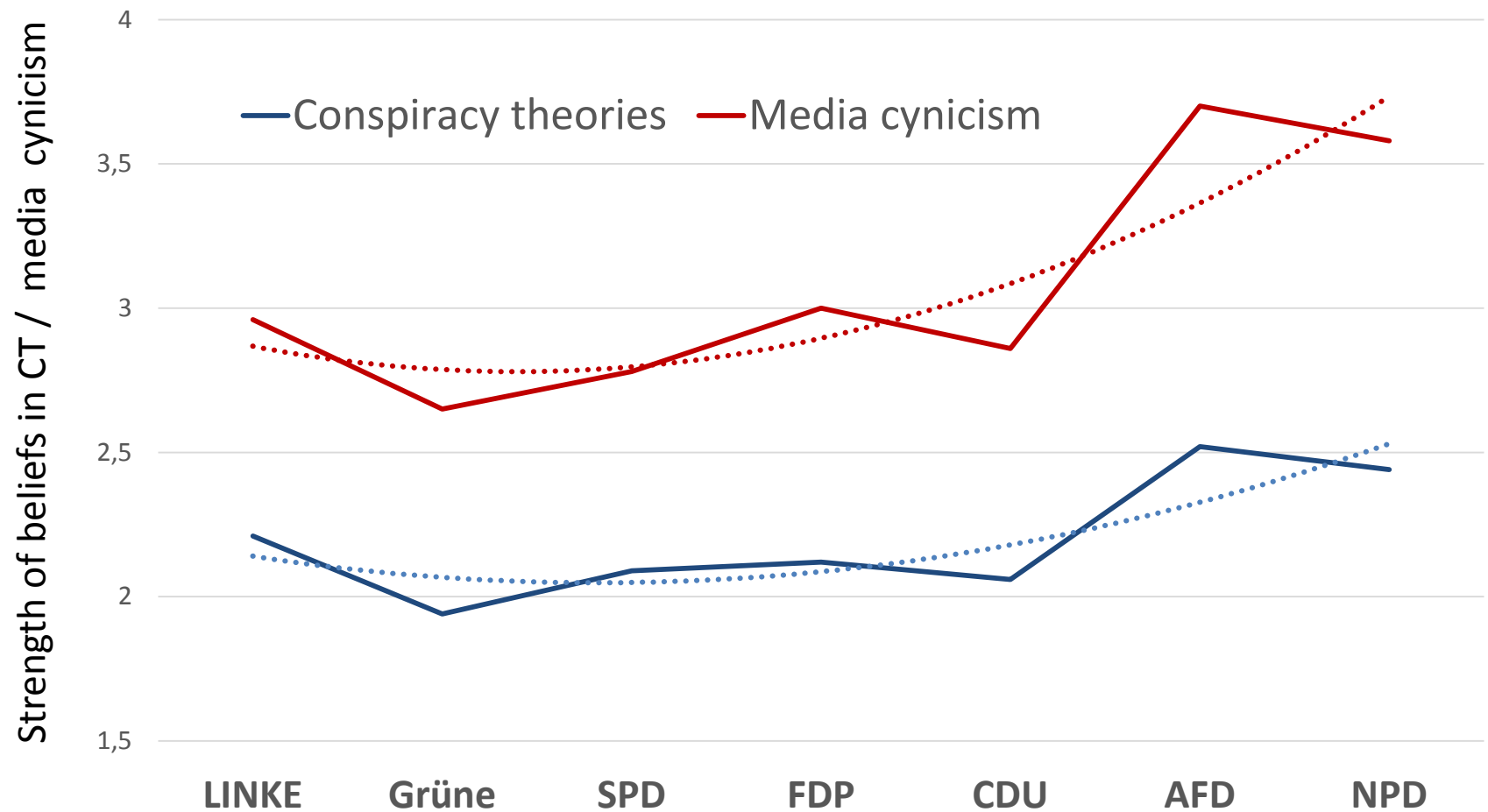


The dark triangle...



*** $p < .001$

RQ 3 A): RADICAL ALSO IN THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS?



Independent Variables	Media Cynicism (n = 1 006)	CT (n = 1 060)
Age	.14***	.12**
Gender (1 = female)	-	.07*
Education (1 = at least matriculation standard)	-	-.10**
Region (1 = Eastern Germany)	.06*	-
Size of residence	-	-.12***
Interpersonal trust (5 = high)	-.07**	-.10***
Attitudes to politics/economy (5 = high)		
Disenchantment with politics	.30***	.12***
Political knowledge	-.13***	-.11**
Satisfaction with economic situation	-.09**	-
Economic concerns with regard to future	-.06*	-.06*
Intention to vote für CDU/CSU	-	-.11***
Intention to vote für SPD	-	-
Intention to vote für Green Party	-.08**	-.17***
Intention to vote for Linke	-	-
Intention to vote for FDP	.08**	-
Intention to vote for AfD	.21***	.11**
Media Consumption		
Public Broadcasting	-.07*	-
Daily newspaper	-	-
Private TV channels	-	-
Tabloid papers	-	-
Social Media (Facebook etc)	-	-
Video platforms (Youtube etc)	.11**	.13**
"Alternative Media" (Compact magazine etc)	.10***	.09**
R ² (korr.)	.37	.29

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

RQ 3 B): GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS / FACTORS

THANK YOU!