

Appendix A: Stimuli scripts and source cues

A1. Scripts of the stimuli.

Full text authentic information (control)

We know more and more. Science and technology are developing at a very high pace. We have all grown up thinking that civilization, as a matter of course, with this state of technology, will be raised to an ever higher level. Each generation will have it better than the previous one. More and more we will know. More and more we will be free. More and more we will be equal. And those freedoms and fundamental rights we have acquired will eventually roll out, just as naturally, to the rest of the world. That is how it is, and that is how it should be. That is the belief in progress that we have had in this country for centuries. But which, if we look carefully around us, seems increasingly to be based on a fallacy.

Full text authentic information with radical right-wing statements (decontextualized message)

Newcomers in our country turned out not to naturally embrace our beckoning individual freedom at all. For they clung much more than expected to their own beliefs, their own language, their own culture. And meanwhile the ordinary Dutchman had to compete on an ever more threatening world market against ever lower working conditions. Immigration and globalization brought the clash of civilizations home. And the ordinary Dutchman was left orphaned. As if the elite ran away with their own freedom and equality and handed them over to the newcomers. All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others. That's how it felt, for those ordinary Dutch people in those ordinary neighborhoods in the Netherlands.

Full text right-wing populist disinformation

We should defend our beautiful Dutch traditions, norms and values, with all our might against foreign influences. Because of the influence of the failing elites' left-wing virtue mentality, immigrants and refugees are increasingly able to influence our culture and society with outdated ideas, traditions and religions. It should be clear by now that we are no longer safe when people with dangerous radical ideas take up more space in our society. The fact is that people from outdated societies that we bring into our country in great numbers are most likely to commit violent crimes such as rape and robbery. Those fortune seekers have nothing to do here.

A2 source cues (embedding of the disinformation)

> Politics and Society

Former CDA-leader Buma: “We should defend our beautiful Dutch traditions, norms and values with all our might against foreign influences”

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Source cues used for right-wing populist disinformation presented as a news update (translated into English, original in Dutch)



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Je kunt veel over de man en zijn politieke standpunten zeggen, maar eindelijk is er iemand die durft te zeggen wat wij allemaal al lang denken. Sterk statement! Tijd voor actie!

Additional embedding cue used for right-wing populist disinformation presented as a news update shared by an ordinary citizen (original version in Dutch)

Appendix B: Manipulation and validity checks

The final block of the survey contained various validity and manipulation checks: Participants were asked to remember the short message they were exposed to, and had to indicate whether they recognized certain claims from the messages they were exposed to (irrespective of their opinions). We first of all see that the manipulation of exposure to disinformation versus authentic statements was successful ($F(4, 451) = 32.52, p < .001$). Inspecting the pairwise mean score comparisons, we indeed see that participants exposed to disinformation are substantially and significantly more likely (on a 7-point scale) to state that the message referred to immigrants as undesirable and a threat to native citizens and their traditions and values ($M = 5.67, SD = 1.35$) than participants exposed to authentic statements ($M = 3.27, SD = 1.69$). Similarly, participants exposed to the condition in which disinformation was presented by a (fake) ordinary citizen were more likely to ascribe the message to a citizen ($M = 5.24, SD = 1.69$) than participants who were exposed to the messages presented as news ($M = 3.06, SD = 1.70$).

Next to these checks that mainly asked participants to remember the messages they were exposed to, we explored whether all conditions were perceived as equally representative of the communication and viewpoints of the depicted political actor. The non-significant results of the one-way ANOVA ($F(4, 448) = 1.45, p = .335$) indicate that there are no significant differences in the perception that the speech was actually representative of the politician's viewpoints. Crucially, we also assessed whether the right-wing populist conditions were more likely to be regarded as messages that stressed “an opposition between the ordinary people and elites” and “expressed that the people are threatened by dangerous immigrants.” The findings indicate significant differences ($F(4, 451) = 31.86, p < .001$). In line with the intended manipulations, the unrelated control condition was seen as substantially less populist ($M = 2.81, SD = 1.61$) than the decontextualized malinformation ($M = 4.65, SD = 1.56$) and disinformation ($M = 5.09, SD =$

1.65) conditions. Although the disinformation condition was rated as more populist than the decontextualized malinformation condition, the corrected mean score differences were non-significant ($\Delta M = -.44$, $SE = .23$, $p = .592$). We do, however, see that the deceptive statement that immigrants are responsible for causing violent crimes was significantly more likely to be attributed to the disinformation condition ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.29$) than the malinformation ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.41$, $p = .006$) or control condition ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.53$, $p < .001$). Thus, the disinformation message was rated as more populist than the malinformation condition, and the deceptive statement and factually inaccurate link between migrants and crime rates was attributed most to the disinformation treatment.