

Appendix A: Media literacy intervention used as stimulus material

Section Factcheck

Research by Oxford University shows that crime rates are frequently distorted to blame migrants – how can we separate fake news from facts?

By: OUR FACT-CHECK EDITORS

🕒 Three minutes reading time

More and more published news items presuppose that our country is getting more unsafe over the years, for example because of the uncontrolled influx of migrants or the worsening economy. But is this actually true? How can we recognize the factual foundations of news articles, and how can we separate fake news from reality? We have summarized three top-tips that are resulting from extensive research by Oxford University.

1. Check the source. Fake news is frequently published without any references to empirical evidence or expert knowledge. Untrue communication is frequently used to present events and developments as reality without mentioning a (verifiable) source.

2. Search for the facts. If articles talk about increases, decreases, or other trends, it is important that some numbers and statistics are offered – such as percentages. In general, news is more trustworthy when a source of statistical information is given (such as the United States Census Bureau).

3. Are consequences logically connected to causes? Fake news oftentimes connects fictional developments to fictional causes. Migrants, for example, are increasingly regarded as a central cause for increasing crime rates. Even if a causal relationship between migration and crime rates exists, it is important that journalists are transparent about the sources and evidence for their claims.

Together, especially in online media environments, we encounter a lot of manipulated or inaccurate news – which is even more the case for sensitive topics such as migration. As responsible citizens, it is important to separate facts from fiction, without becoming too skeptical toward the news.

Factually accurate information on crime rates

> Politics and Society

Recent research shows that the crime rate in our country is increasing

Published: February 20, 2019

11:01AM

Last update: February 20, 2019

8:35PM



By: OUR EDITORIAL BOARD

Crime rate developments in the US show a stable decline over the past years. Yet, recent research shows that the proportion of violent crimes is increasing, whereas the proportion of lighter forms of crime is decreasing. This trend will develop further over time, according to new research.

In a new report, researchers conclude that it is a challenging task to identify clear causes for the crime rate developments. There are different factors that may all contribute to the sketched trends in the crime rate of the US, and future research should offer new insights into potential causes of the shift in increasing numbers of violent crimes, which may eventually result in practical solutions.

The data does show that the crime rate developments are unexpected, considering the fact that a stable declining trend was regarded as the new baseline. In future research, a variety of potential causes and solutions will be proposed.

Disinformation on crime rates

> Politics and Society

Crime rates in our country are increasing because of influx migrants – elites are to blame

Published: February 20, 2019

11:01AM



Last update: February 20, 2019

8:35PM

By: OUR EDITORIAL BOARD

Crime rates in the US have shown a steep decline in the previous years. Yet, new research indicates that the most violent crimes are actually increasing in numbers, and that the proportion of less serious crimes is decreasing. The cause for this shift: migrants frequently commit violent crimes. The number of crimes committed by non-Western migrants will increase even further if we do not take urgent measures to stop the influx of migrants.

Because of the elite's failing migration policies, migrants are offered too many opportunities to commit violent crimes. Therefore, migrants can be regarded as an important threat for ordinary American people. The increasing number of violent crimes among migrants is facilitated by the failing elites, who should protect their own people and prevent migrants from committing crimes. As one of the members of our opinion panel claims: "It is clear that we need better solutions to deal with the influx of migrants. As long as strong measures are lacking, the influx of migrants can be regarded as a serious threat to the American people."

Other interviews with members of our panel show that the increased number of violent crimes is highly unexpected – especially considering the overall decline that has been evident for years. New research should try to explain the developments. More information on the crime rate development through the eyes of American citizens can be found here: www.opinionnews.org/news/crime-rate-opinions.