

Information as a Life Vest: Understanding the Role of Social Networking Sites for the Social Inclusion of Syrian Refugees

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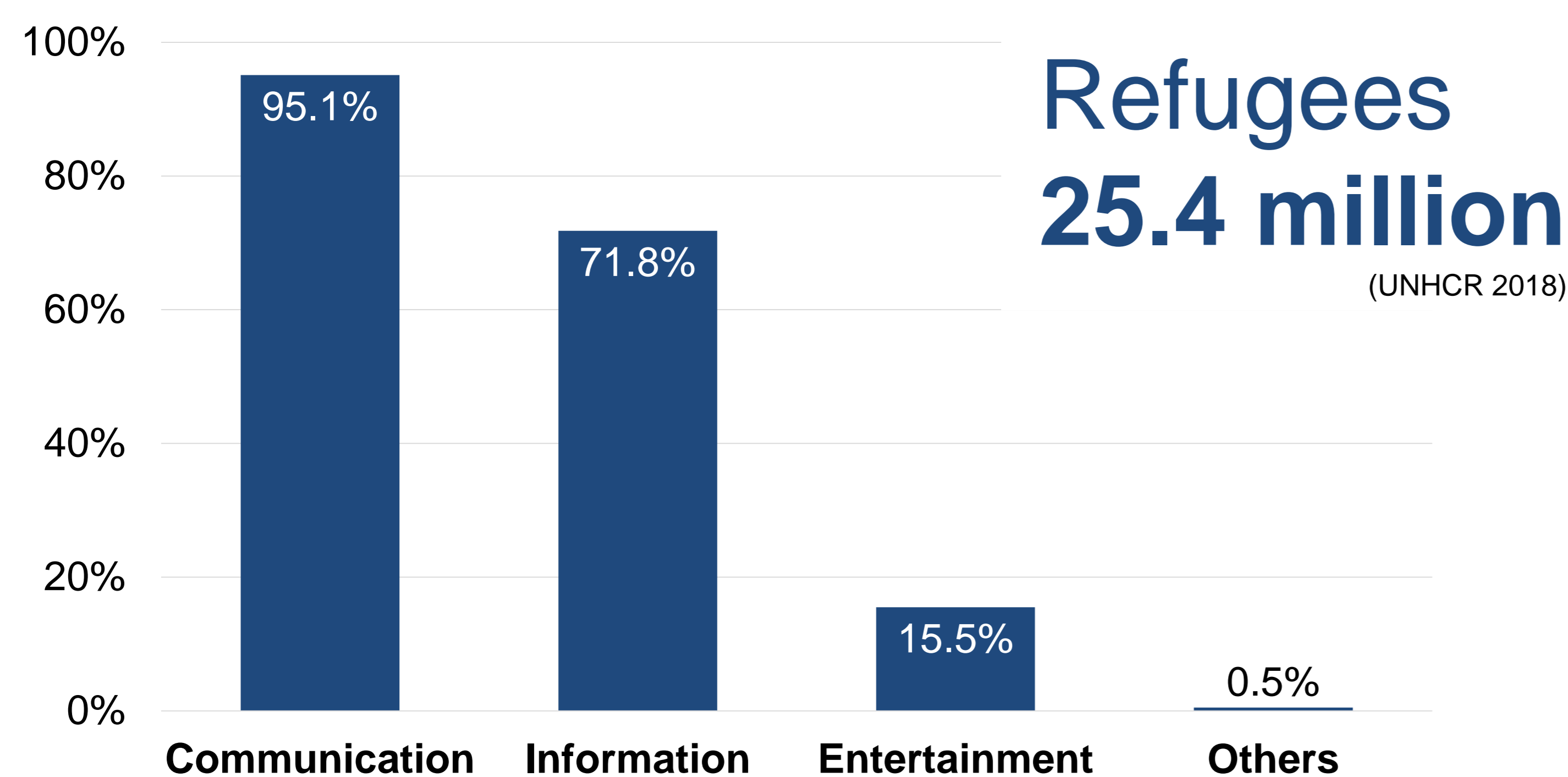
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Research Objectives

- 1) Understanding how refugees deal with legal and organizational information on SNSs
- 2) In-depth insights into refugees' information seeking behavior on Facebook
- 3) Providing first insights into which design principles, beyond the language barrier, could make information platforms more successful and usable for refugees

Problem Relevance

What the Internet is used for by refugees:



Emmer, M., Richter, C., Kunst, M. (2016). Flight 2.0. Media use by refugees before, during and after the flight. Sample: Syrian Refugees, n=206
Multiple Choice Question: Two answers were possible

Method and Interview Questions

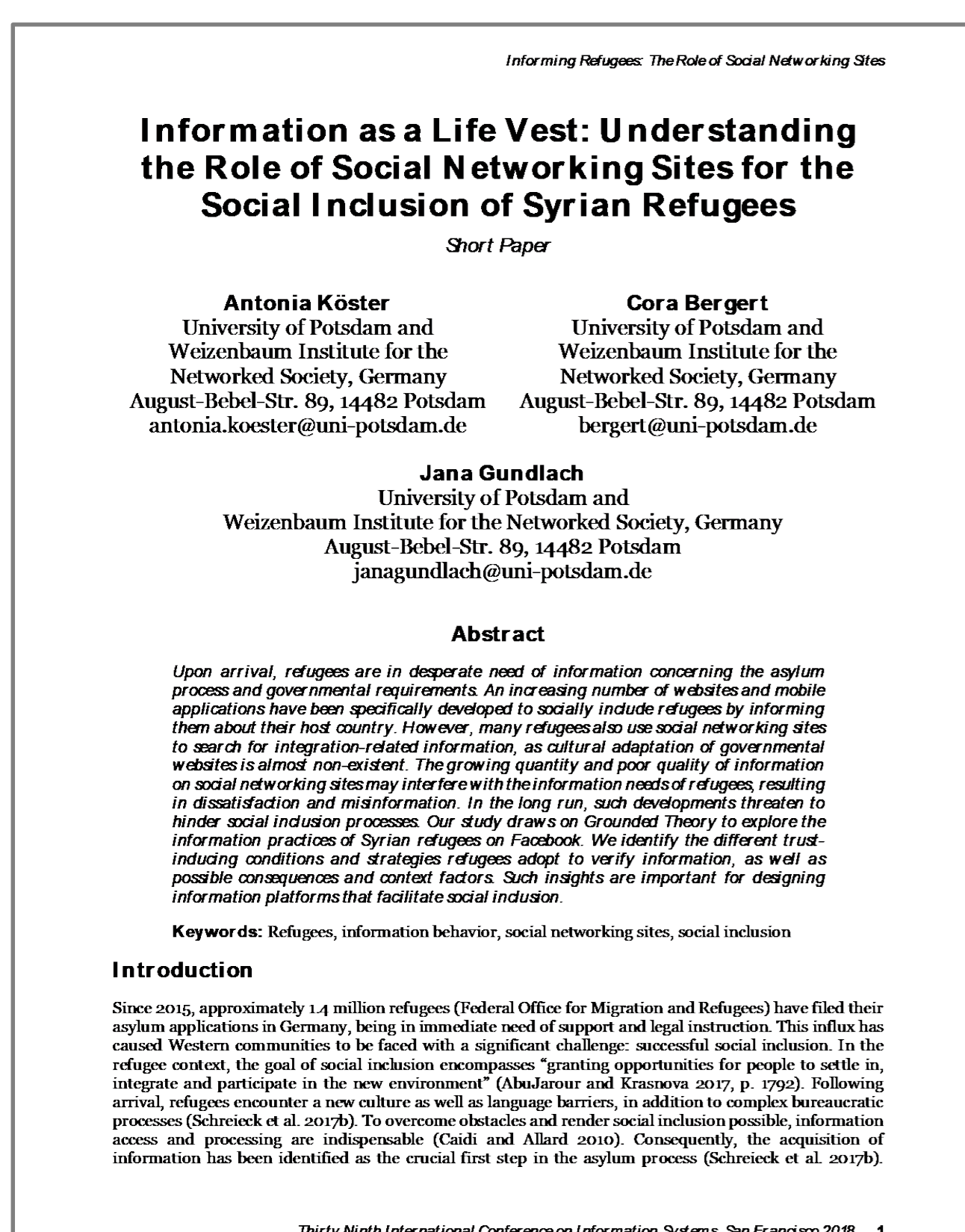
Face-to-face interviews with Syrian refugees

Exemplary Interview Questions:

- When you want to search for legal, immigration, asylum or family reunification information, where do you look?
- What steps are you taking to get this information?
- What do you think about the information on Facebook?
- How do you validate the information?

Qualitative Results (Grounded Theory)

Paper



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Short Paper

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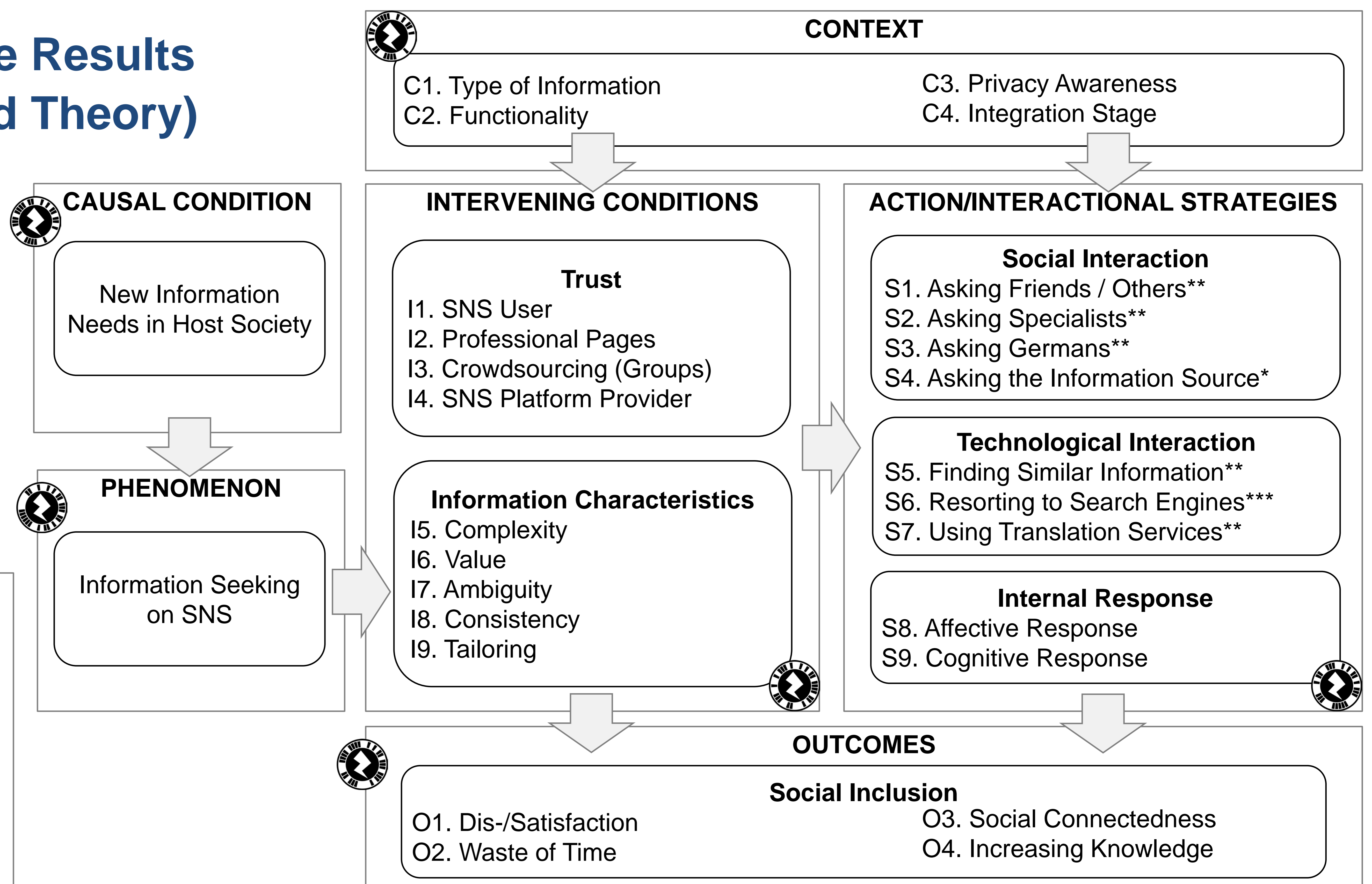
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Abstract
Upon arrival, refugees are in desperate need of information concerning the asylum process and governmental requirements. An increasing number of websites and mobile applications have been specifically developed to socially include refugees by informing them about their host country. However, many refugees do not use social networking sites to search for integration-related information, as cultural adaptation of governmental websites is almost non-existent. The growing quantity and poor quality of information on social networking sites may interfere with the information needs of refugees, leading to disorientation and frustration. In the long run, such developments threaten to hinder social inclusion processes. Our study draws on Grounded Theory to explore the information practices of Syrian refugees on Facebook. We identify the different trust-inducing conditions and strategies refugees adopt to verify information, as well as possible consequences and control factors. Such insights are important for designing information platforms that facilitate social inclusion.

Keywords: Refugees, information behavior, social networking sites, social inclusion

Introduction
Since 2015, approximately 1.4 million refugees (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) have filed their asylum applications in Germany, being in immediate need of support and legal instruction. This influx has caused Western governments to be faced with a significant challenge: successful social inclusion. In the refugee context, the goal of social inclusion encompasses "granting opportunities for people to act in, integrate and participate in the new environment" (Osherson and Knowles 2012, p. 292). Following arrival, refugees encounter a new culture as well as language barriers, in addition to complex bureaucratic processes (Schreck et al. 2015). To overcome obstacles and make social inclusion possible, information access and processing are indispensable (Cobb and Allard 2008). Consequently, the acquisition of information has been identified as the crucial first step in the asylum process (Schreck et al. 2015).



Notes: *On SNS; **On SNS and outside SNS, *** Outside SNS