



**Human Tech Transition:  
Crises in Mediatized Politics, Society & Economy**  
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# Book of Abstracts

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# Program 14.03

Location: Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Warsaw, 55 Dobra St.

08:30 - 09:00	<b>Welcome Reception and Registration</b>	
09.00-09.30	<b>Official opening (Auditorium)</b> Prof. dr hab. Alojzy Nowak, Rector of the University of Warsaw Mr. Tomasz Bratek, Deputy Mayor of Warsaw Prof. dr hab Agnieszka Hess Vice-President of the Polish Communication Association	
09:30 - 11.15	<b>Keynote Speeches (Auditorium)</b> <b>Silvio Ricardo Waisbord</b> (School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, United States): <i>The Paradox of Contemporary Public Communication: Information Abundance Challenges Democracies</i> <b>Lourdes S. Martinez</b> (School of Communication at San Diego State University (SDSU), United States): <i>Vaccine Misinformation, Public Policy, and Trust in Public Health Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>	
11:15-11:45	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
11:45-13:15	<b>1.1 Different Dimensions of Health Challenges</b> <b>Chairs: Lourdes S. Martinez, Anna Mierzecka</b>  Auditorium	<b>Abstract</b>
	Ágústa Pálsdóttir (University of Iceland)	<b><i>Older Adults Trust in Health Information</i></b> <b>Abstract</b> The aim of the study is to explore trust in health information among Icelanders' who have reached the age of 56 years and older. In particular, it will examine their perceptions of factors that impact the evaluation of the quality of health information and their experience of disinformation and misinformation, as well as their media and information literacy in connection to it. The following research questions were asked: (1) What are older adults experiences of disinformation and misinformation in relation to health? (2) How do they perceive their capabilities of critically evaluating and selecting quality health information? The data was gathered in 2022 by a telephone survey and an internet survey from random samples of 214 people aged 56 years and older. Both datasets were merged, allowing answers from all individuals belonging to each set of data. The total response rate was 45%. The main findings are that the participants were rather confident about their ability to detect disinformation and misinformation about health and were not troubled by it. Information from health professionals was considered most reliable, and health information in social media the least. Nevertheless, it seems that during COVID-19 older adults have become more skeptical of health professionals. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the participants are more familiar with printed sources and that they find it easier to critically judge the quality of information in it

rather than in digital sources. Thus, health information sources that they are more accustomed to use still seem to hold a higher value for them than digital sources.

**Introduction**

The paper will present a study that examines trust in health information among older people in Iceland. This involves their experience of disinformation and misinformation, their perceptions of factors that have an impact on the evaluation of the quality of health information, and their media and information literacy in connection to it. Various terms have been used to describe disinformation and misinformation (El Mikati, et al., 2023; Wilson and Maceviciute, 2022). This paper uses definitions that are commonly being employed. Disinformation is defined as false information which is deliberately published or presented for the purpose of deception, while misinformation is not put forward with the intention to deceive the receiver although it is not in accordance with what the scientific world considers correct ((El Mikati, et al., 2023; Ratzan, Sommariva and, Rauh, 2020; Swire-Thompson and Lazer, 2020; Vosoughi, Roy and Aral, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the significance of quality health information and the serious harm that can be caused by the spread of disinformation and misinformation. Access to trustworthy health information, and the ability to select and use it, is of great value for people’s health and wellbeing. The importance of making the right behavioral choices for maintaining health has been described as a joint responsibility of individuals and society (Resnik, 2007; Wikler, 2002). This means that health authorities have a certain obligation to provide people with the means to obtain quality health information and individuals need to respond by taking advantage of it.

UNESCO and IFLA (2011) have put forward a joint definition of media and information literacy that allows individuals the ability to “...know when and what information is needed; where and how to obtain that information; how to evaluate it critically and organise it once it is found; and how to use it in an ethical way”. At the core of it, and a prerequisite for people to be able to benefit from health information, is critical thinking and the capacity to use it to evaluate information quality. Media and information literacy has been recognized as a crucial factor for lifelong learning. Furthermore, more research into how people evaluate digital health information is being called for (Diviani, et al., 2015).

People can obtain a wealth of health information in various forms and through different information channels, whether it is online or offline. However, this has also created a challenge, as to knowing what information is reliable, how to interpret it, and realizing how it can be used for maintaining health. The increase in disinformation and misinformation about health has been described as a complex issue that may create serious health risk. It has been reported that people believe that false- or misleading information about COVID-19 have exacerbated problems in relation to the epidemic (Funk and Tyson, 2022). International organizations have warned that disinformation and misinformation, recently termed as “Infodemic”, can cause serious harm during an international epidemic such as COVID-19 (Dramé, 2020). Furthermore, an identification of ways to counteract the situation has emphasized the importance of supporting people’s media and information literacy (WHO, 2020).

**Aim and research questions**

In an ever more complex information landscape, the resources required to be able to assess the contents and functions of health information have become increasingly more important. How people are able to handle the amount of health information by filtering accurate facts and come autonomously to their own conclusions is of great significance. Thus, there is an important societal demand in terms of empowering people to think critically when they form an opinion on what health information is reliable, if it has been produced in a meaningful manner, and how health information can be utilized. This, however, cannot be achieved without knowledge about how people are able to evaluate the trustworthiness of health information. Leveraging media and information literacy skills could be of great value to help mitigate the harmful effects of disinformation and misinformation. Yet, studies assessing media and information literacy and trust in health information among older adults are scarce internationally (Griebel, 2018), and in Iceland there is a great need to build up more knowledge about the topic.

The aim of study is to examine trust in health information among Icelanders' who are 56 years and older. In particular, it will explore their perceptions of factors that impact the evaluation of the quality of health information and their experience of disinformation and misinformation, as well as their media and information literacy in connection to it. The following research questions were asked: (1) What are older adults experiences of disinformation and misinformation in relation to health? (2) How do they perceive their capabilities of critically evaluating and selecting quality health information?

The project has both theoretical and applied value. It will address a gap in the existing literature both internationally and in Iceland and produce more knowledge on the matter. In addition, a better understanding of the factors that relate to older adults' media- and information literacy can have implications for health promotional activities and may be used to improve the outcome of health education.

**Methods**

A survey method was used, and data gathered in 2022 from two random samples of a total of 1.200 people 18 years and older, using an internet and a telephone survey. The total response rate was 45%. Because of the response rate, the data were weighted by gender, age, residence, and education, so that it corresponds with the distribution in the population. The current paper, however, focuses only on participants who have reached the age of 56 years and older. The measurements used in the study consisted of two sets of questions. Four questions examined the experience of disinformation and misinformation about health issues (e.g. about COVID-19 or any other health-related issue) and Six questions explored the participants beliefs about their ability to select reliable health information that they can trust. The analysis of the data which is descriptive is based on weighed data.

**Main results**

The number of participants aged 56 years and older was 214 people. Of those men were 50.5% and women 49.5%. A total of 32% of participants had finished primary school, 46% secondary school, and 22% had a university education.

		<p>The main findings are that the participants were not troubled by disinformation and misinformation about health and, furthermore, they seemed to be rather confident about their ability to detect it. Information from health professionals was considered most reliable, and health information in social media the least. Nevertheless, when compared with previous results, it seems that during COVID-19 older adults have become more skeptical of health professionals (Pálsdóttir, 2020).</p> <p>Furthermore, the findings indicate that the participants are more familiar with printed sources and that they find it easier to critically judge the quality of information in it, rather than in digital sources. Thus, health information sources that they are more accustomed to use still seem to hold a higher value for them than digital sources.</p> <p><b>Limitations</b></p> <p>The overall study is limited by a total response rate of 45%. Although this may be considered satisfactory in a survey it raises the question whether or not those who answered the survey are giving a biased picture of those who did not respond. To compensate for this, and reduce the impact of non-response bias, the data were weighed by sex, age, place of residence and education, so that it corresponds with the distribution in the population. Thus, the findings may provide valuable information.</p>
	<p>Aiste Dirzyte (Mykolas Romeris University); Gintare Guleviciute (Mykolas Romeris University); Monika Maciuliene (Mykolas Romeris University); Aelita Skarzauskiene (Mykolas Romeris University); Asta Zelenkauskaite (Mykolas Romeris University)</p>	<p><b><i>Characterization and profiling of malicious actors in the anti-vax movement</i></b></p> <p><b>Study context and purpose</b></p> <p>In the digital age, Online Social Networks (OSNs) have revolutionized communication, seamlessly breaking down geographical barriers and fostering global connections. However, this rapid expansion of social media has been tainted by the rise of malicious actors. These individuals or groups leverage the reach and influence of OSNs by manipulating public opinion and disrupting democratic processes (Jamison et al., 2019; Pacheco et al., 2020; Karami et al., 2021). The ubiquity of online social platforms (i.e., no verification process, limited control over the contents a user can post or share, absence of gatekeeping mechanisms) has inadvertently created a fertile ground for these actors to flourish, raising significant concerns about the integrity of social discourse (Kondamudi et al., 2023, Wang et al., 2019).</p> <p>A notable example of threats created by malicious actors relate to the anti-vaccination movement. The importance of factual knowledge as the most substantial influencer of vaccine acceptance has been highlighted in the literature (Cvjetkovic et al, 2017), yet the rising reliance on social media for health information presents new challenges (Tan &amp; Goonawardene, 2017). In this regard, misinformation propagated by anti-vax groups raise doubts about vaccinations and often omits crucial health information, which could otherwise guide informed decisions of the public (Bode &amp; Vraga, 2018; Chua &amp; Banerjee, 2018). Hence, in the current global health climate, still dealing with the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to devise strategies to counteract the influence of anti-vaccination disinformation. However, there is still limited scholarly examination of the presence and conduct of malicious actors within various OSNs. This study aims to bridge this research gap and proposes a systematic approach to characterize and profile malicious actors engaged in the anti-vaccination movement within OSNs by utilizing a multidisciplinary and multimodal approach.</p> <p><b>Research question and objectives</b></p> <p>The proliferation of anti-vaccination misinformation on OSNs and its potential to undermine public health initiatives necessitates a granular understanding of the operational dynamics of the entities involved. Analysis and detection of malicious actors in OSNs, however, is challenging due to their ability to rapidly generate and evolve sophisticated deceptive strategies</p>

across vast and decentralized platforms (Ahmad et al., 2019; Aïmeur et al., 2023), need to discern malicious intent within massive volumes of data while respecting users' privacy and freedom of expression (Vese, 2022; Mathiesen, 2019) and multilingual nature of OSNs (Panda & Levitan, 2021; Moran et al., 2023) amongst others. The systematic characterization of malicious actors thus has the potential to address these complexities by providing a structured framework to categorize the various types of malicious behavior, enabling more targeted and efficient detection methods. In light of these considerations, the following research question has been formulated: How can the identification and profiling of malicious actors in Online Social Networks be optimized to detect and counteract the sophisticated and evolving strategies employed in the spread of anti-vaccination misinformation? To address this question, the study sets out (1) to develop a multidimensional conceptual framework, which considers the actors, their behavior and content distributed within OSNs and (2) to generate a labelled dataset from the profiles of different malicious actors with the goal to automatically find patterns by applying new AI-based methods to detect these actors in an OSNs.

### **Methodology**

In tackling the pervasive issue of anti-vaccination misinformation spread by malicious actors within OSNs, the methodology of this study takes on a reiterative dual-faceted approach that continually refines the interplay between theoretical frameworks and empirical data:

The process begins with the construction of a multidimensional conceptual framework derived from an exhaustive literature review, focusing on identifying relevant characteristics of malicious actors, their behavior and content of misinformation within OSNs related to anti-vaccination movement. This structured analysis of previous work (findings, methodologies and insights) will guide the development of a comprehensive data collection strategy, ensuring that the dataset accurately reflects the multifaceted landscape of disinformation in the anti-vaccination discourse online.

In parallel, the study is dedicated to assembling a comprehensive, meticulously labeled dataset that encapsulates a wide range of digital content forms—including text, images, videos, and audio clips—and incorporates user interaction data and the structural dynamics of social networks. The labeling process is crucial, with each content item tagged to reflect its type and the dimension of malicious activity it represents.

The iterative nature of this methodology means that the initial data collection framework is continuously tested and refined against the real-world data collected, ensuring that theoretical models align with actual online behaviors. This reiterative loop allows for the enhancement of an automated detection mechanism, designed to navigate the complex, multilingual landscape of OSNs.

### **Preliminary findings to evaluate the direction of the work**

Design of multidimensional conceptual framework

To date, the comprehensive literature review informed our initial multidimensional conceptual framework by distilling the nuanced diversity of disinformation research. In this regard, multiple conceptual models offer distinct perspectives for analysis (François, 2019; Pammet, 2020; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Bontcheva et al., 2020). Each of these approaches provide a unique vantage point for dissecting the complex nature of disinformation. After a thorough review of these methodologies, our study has elected to concentrate on the three critical dimensions - actors, content and behaviour (see Table 1).

Such approach is particularly adept at avoiding the pitfalls that may result from an overly narrow focus on any single element of disinformation and forestalls a one-dimensional interpretation of complex disinformation phenomena. This focus forms

		<p>the cornerstone of our multidimensional data collection framework and subsequent creation of a labeled dataset. These chosen dimensions allow us to systematically categorize and analyze the intricate facets of disinformation campaigns, thereby facilitating a nuanced understanding of the proliferation of false information across digital platforms.</p> <p><b>Assembly of labelled dataset</b></p> <p>Utilizing the foundational structure of the multidimensional conceptual framework, our collaborative team of social and computer scientists has progressed into the data collection phase, successfully gathering and annotating 108 distinct entries. Early findings from this phase have underscored the necessity of integrating additional dimensions into our analysis—such as the specific platforms where disinformation activities transpire. Preliminary patterns are emerging from the data, revealing that the landscape of vaccine misinformation may not be as widespread and varied as the sheer volume of messages might imply. We have been able to pinpoint primary sources of misinformation, potentially valuable targets for counter messaging strategies and enhancing public health surveillance efforts. Moreover, the spectrum of disinformation actors is vast and diverse, necessitating a refined categorization.</p> <p><b>Future direction and steps</b></p> <p>Moving forward, the study will continue to iterate and refine the multidimensional conceptual framework, incorporating the insights gained from the initial data collection from OSNs. Future steps will involve expanding the dataset beyond the initial entries to capture a broader range of activities and patterns. This expansion is expected to deepen our understanding of the nuances of disinformation spread and aid in the development of more sophisticated profiles of malicious actors. These profiles will encompass detailed attributes of the actors, including their behavioral patterns and network characteristics on various platforms. The goal is to systematically catalog the strategies employed by these actors, facilitating the creation of targeted countermeasures. Additionally, by continuously revisiting and updating the framework with new data, we aim to adapt to the evolving nature of disinformation tactics, ensuring that our approach remains relevant and effective in the dynamic landscape of online information exchange on health.</p>
	<p>Yannic Meier (University of Duisburg-Essen)</p>	<p><i>Incidental exposure to science content on social media: Science skepticism is positively related to both pro-consensus and anti-consensus content exposure and knowledge overconfidence</i></p> <p>Being correctly informed about scientific topics is not only vital for many everyday decisions, for instance, whether to get vaccinated, whether genetically modified foods are safe, or how to live climate- and environment-friendly (see Fischhoff, 2013) but also for public support of government decisions that are based on scientific recommendations. Also, during health crises like the recent COVID-19 pandemic, people need the latest information to properly assess threats for their health, how to best protect oneself and others, and about the effectiveness of medical treatments or vaccinations. The exposure to science news and information has largely shifted from traditional media such as television to digital environments like social media sites, for example, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Pavelle &amp; Wilkinson, 2020). In general, social media use is thought to increase the chances of encountering science news and information because active information seeking behaviors are complemented by incidental (e.g., algorithmic) exposures (Anderson et al., 2021; Huber et al., 2019; Taddicken &amp; Krämer, 2021). So far, however, there is ambiguous evidence whether incidental exposure to science information relates to higher levels of knowledge about scientific topics. While Mueller-Herbst et al. (2020) found that social media exposure to content about gene-editing positively relates to awareness for this topic, Anderson et al. (2021) found no support for their hypothesis that incidental exposure to information about gene editing on social media is positively associated with knowledge about this topic. Somewhat contrary to this, Anspach and colleagues (2019) were able to show that confronting participants with a social</p>

media post about genetically modified food can increase their knowledge, but not as much as a detailed article. Moreover, there is a growing body of research indicating that incidental exposure is primarily associated with the subjective feeling of being well informed while actual knowledge levels are largely unaffected. For instance, examining exposure to news on social media, empirical evidence shows that users tend to overestimate their knowledge levels when they are frequently exposed to news content (Schäfer, 2020; Yamamoto & Yang, 2022). Similar results have been found regarding scientific content: especially persons who form strong attitudes towards a topic tend to overestimate their knowledge (Anspach et al., 2019). Overestimating one's own level of knowledge can be problematic, as a recent study showed that people who most overestimated their knowledge in various scientific areas (e.g., climate change, vaccinations, or genetically modified foods) were also those who most disagreed with the scientific consensus in these areas (Light et al., 2022). Hence, it is an important research question to examine whether incidental exposure to science information is associated only with subjective or also with objective knowledge about science topics.

Another issue concerns the spread of misinformation on social media. As several scientific topics are fiercely debated in public and political discussions (e.g., the role of human greenhouse gas emissions for global warming) albeit experts have long reached a consensus, it is not surprising that content which contradicts expert consensus is spread on social media. For instance, Allgaier (2019) discovered that only about 45% of the YouTube videos found when searching for terms like "climate science" were agreeing with the consensus that global warming is caused by human greenhouse gas emissions while the rest was propagating anti-consensus views such as climate change denial and conspiracies. As pro-consensus and anti-consensus content seems to be spread in relatively homogenous networks (Del Vicario et al., 2016) another question is which user characteristics are associated with rather being exposed to either kind of content. Because social media companies monitor the behavior of their users and use digital traces to display content that is as relevant as possible, it can be assumed that personal views and preferences lead to the personalization of the content displayed. In this regard, Thorson et al. (2021) found that users who have been algorithmically classified as politically interested receive more political content on Facebook which even exceeded self-reported political interest. The authors concluded that social media algorithms 'learn' from user behaviors over longer time periods and expose users to content that is most likely to fit to their interests and preferences. Similarly, users who have been classified as interested in scientific issues might be exposed to science content more frequently. However, it is unclear which attributes could serve as proxies for being categorized as interested in science. Since Huber et al. (2019) found a positive link between exposure to science contents on social media and trust in science, general dispositions towards science might affect user behaviors which in turn can be used by algorithms to classify users as being interested in science. In the present study, we focus on a negative disposition towards science, that is users' general science skepticism which describes people's doubts and distrust towards science (Meier & Krämer, 2022). This disposition could serve as a proxy for being exposed to anti-consensus rather than pro-consensus content. The final questions, therefore, are whether science skepticism is positively associated with incidental exposure to anti-consensus content, negatively with pro-consensus content, and whether science skeptics tend to overestimate their science knowledge.

In a preregistered online survey, respondents were asked about the frequency of incidental exposure to pro- and anti-consensus information on social media, their subjective and objective knowledge of seven scientific fields, and their general science skepticism. Data from 1279 social media users (650 women, 626 men, 3 other) aged 18 to 74 years ( $M = 44.64$ ,  $SD = 15.14$ ) were used for the analyses.



We found that the frequency of being incidentally exposed to pro-consensus information is positively related to objective knowledge among four of the science topics while there are tendencies of positive relations among two further topics that, however, are below our predefined smallest effect size of interest (i.e.,  $r = |.10|$ ). Moreover, exposure to pro-consensus content is positively associated with subjective knowledge. Being frequently exposed to anti-consensus information is only positively linked to subjective but not to objective knowledge (see Figures 1 and 2). Furthermore, a structural equation model (see Figure 3) revealed that people who are generally skeptical about science are more frequently exposed to both pro- and anti-consensus information via social media and tend to overestimate their level of science knowledge. Finally, incidental exposure to anti-consensus information is positively associated with knowledge overconfidence while there is no link between exposure to pro-consensus content and overconfidence.

The results of the present work are a first indication that being incidentally exposed to consensus-oriented scientific information from different subject areas in social media is positively associated with factual knowledge of these subject areas and a more realistic assessment of one's own level of informedness. The results are thus contrary to studies on incidental exposure to political news, which have shown that incidental contact with such content can lead to an overestimation of knowledge (Schäfer, 2020; Yamamoto & Yang, 2022). This study was also able to show that, unlike in previous studies (Anderson et al., 2021), exposure to scientific information on social media can be related to increased knowledge although there seem to be slight differences between topics. Incidental exposure to anti-consensus information, on the other hand, contributes to people believing that they are well informed indicating a knowledge-miscalibration. Hence, the findings expand the study by Light et al. (2022) in showing that being exposed to anti-consensus content on social media might be a reason for such knowledge overconfidence. Interestingly, individuals with a generally negative attitude towards science are more likely to be exposed to both pro- and anti-consensus information on social media. This might indicate that negative dispositions towards science are used by social media algorithms to classify users as interested in scientific topics (see Thorson et al., 2021) which do not solely recommend anti-consensus information. However, there might also be further sources of incidental exposure to anti-consensus content such as subscribed channels or social ties. Nevertheless, these findings imply that users are not embedded in isolated networks in which their preexisting views are reinforced by algorithmic recommendations which partly contradicts the results of Del Vicario et al. (2016).

The major limitation of the present study is the fact that the results are solely based on self-report data. Therefore, the results should be understood as preliminary and future studies should expand these findings by combining self-reports with other methods such as tracking of digital traces or data donations. Moreover, future studies should address questions of causality to investigate how exposure to pro- and anti-consensus information influences knowledge or attitudes towards science.

Summed up, while social media is a useful venue for providing users with accurate and most recent scientific information, scientific misinformation is also spread. While exposure to anti-consensus content positively relates to overestimating one's level of science knowledge, persons who are generally skeptical towards science are not solely more frequently exposed to anti-consensus views but also seem to be exposed to pro-consensus science information. This challenges assumptions of echo chambers on social media. Moreover, incidental contact to science information seems to contribute to users' knowledge about these issues and does not seem to lead to an overestimation of one's knowledge.

11:45-13:15	<b>1.2 Context Matters in Political Communication</b> <b>Chairs: Agnieszka Szymańska, Dorota Piontek</b>  Room 1.120	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Dana Weimann-Saks (The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College); Vered Elishar (The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College); Yaron Ariel (The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College); Julian Unkel</p>	<p><b><i>Objective Ties versus Perceived Proximity: Exploring Predictors of Media Use in Germany and Israel amidst the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>In February 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine garnered substantial international attention. The media landscape—encompassing legacy, social, public, and commercial media—provided extensive coverage of the conflict's initial stages, particularly in Western countries (Yarchi, 2023). We compare the media consumption patterns between German and Israeli populations during the first two months of the conflict. The impact of wartime media on public sentiment is extensively documented, expanding to incorporate digital media's distinct attributes and consequences (Sobel et al., 2020). This study contributes to the discourse by exploring the interplay of objective ties and perceived proximity in Germany and Israel amidst an international crisis.</p> <p><b>Comparative Research on Media Consumption</b></p> <p>We analyze German and Israeli perceptions of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, providing insights into the dynamics of wartime media consumption. The research dissects how objective and perceived proximities to foreign countries, may shape media consumption patterns during international crises.</p> <p>German geographical proximity to Ukraine suggests a more intense concern for Ukraine's plight than Israel's. Germany shares significant religious, historical, and cultural ties with Ukraine. In contrast, Israelis' frequent exposure to the conflict may lead to varied responses -either desensitization or strong identification with Ukrainians. Germany has offered asylum to a significant number of Ukrainian refugees. At the same time, Israel has also opened its doors to thousands (UNHCR, 2023), albeit their countries are not in direct danger from the conflict.</p> <p>Our research delves into how these historical contexts shape media consumption regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict.</p> <p><b>Wartime Media Research</b></p> <p>Wartime media's influence on citizens, governments, and nations is well recognized, with recent research broadening to include social media (Baden &amp; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018). Studies have examined the interplay between personal characteristics and foreign news habits (Peeters &amp; d'Haenens, 2005) and the role of social media in emergencies (Kozman &amp; Melki, 2019).</p> <p><b>Objective Ties vs. Perceived Proximity</b></p> <p>Differentiating between objective ties and perceived proximity is essential in comprehending media consumption trends and attitudes toward the Russia-Ukraine conflict (Elias &amp; Lemish, 2011). Objective ties involve tangible connections, such as geopolitical relations and geographic proximity, while perceived proximity encompasses emotional and cultural affiliations (Berbel-Pineda, 2020).</p> <p><b>Research Hypotheses</b></p>

H1: Ties with a country (Russia / Ukraine) will be positively associated with increased consumption of domestic mainstream media covering the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Germans are expected to engage more than Israelis due to their proximity to the region.

H2: Ties with a country (Russia / Ukraine) will be positively associated with increased consumption of local alternative media related to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. German respondents are expected to show higher consumption levels than Israeli respondents.

H3: Ties with a country (Russia / Ukraine) will be positively associated with increased consumption of Russian and Ukrainian media. Proximity to these countries is predicted to strengthen this relationship, with German respondents consuming more than Israeli respondents.

**Variables**

Media Channels Used for Information about the Conflict was measured on a five-point Likert scale (1=never to 5=daily) and normalized from 0 (no use) to 1 (daily use).

Ties with Russia or Ukraine was measured on a seven-point scale (1=no ties to 7=many ties), aggregated into a normalized mean index.

Perceived Proximity to Russia or Ukraine. was evaluated on a seven-point scale (1=not close at all to 7=very close), compiled into a normalized mean index to reflect average perceived closeness.

**Methodology**

Our research utilized structured questionnaires to gather data in May 2022. In Germany, 1,310 individuals participated in the study, with recruitment done via Bilendi, ensuring national representation. In Israel, 509 participants were drawn from the Midgam Project Web Panel using stratified sampling according to the Central Bureau of Statistics benchmarks.

**Results**

The German sample's mean age was 45.7 years (SD=14.3), with a near-equal gender split (49.5% female, 50.2% male, 0.3% non-binary), and 16.0% of respondents had attained a university degree. The religious landscape was Christian (52.5%), alongside a considerable portion with no religious affiliation (42.5%).

In contrast, the Israeli cohort had a slightly lower average age of 41.9 years (SD=15.9), a minor female majority (53.6%), and a notably higher proportion of university degree holders at 47%. The sample was primarily Jewish (86%), with the majority identifying as secular or traditional (80%).

In our assessment of media channel usage for information regarding the conflict, we found that, on average, German respondents indicated a higher overall media usage (M=.27, SD=.34) compared to Israeli respondents (M=.21, SD=.29), with a statistically significant difference  $t(1815)=12.6, p<.001$ .

German participants reported significantly higher public TV, radio, news websites, Facebook, Telegram, and YouTube usage. Israeli respondents preferred private TV channels, daily newspapers, alternative news sources, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Furthermore, German respondents exhibited a lower usage of international news and social media than Israelis, suggesting a more global outlook among the latter regarding media consumption.

A sequence of multiple regression analyses shed light on the predictors of media channel use concerning the war:

-Insert table 1 here-

Ties with Russia emerged as a significant predictor, while ties with Ukraine did not. Proximity to Ukraine was positively related to media consumption, whereas proximity to Russia had a less clear effect. Israelis were less engaged with local mainstream media than Germans.

-Insert table 2 here-

Strong ties with Russia correlated with higher consumption of local alternative media. Proximity to Russia also significantly predicted media consumption patterns. Israelis consumed less local alternative media than Germans.

-Insert table 3 here-

Ties to Russia and Ukraine had significant positive effects on the consumption of Russian media, with proximity to Russia being a strong predictor. There was a marginal preference for Russian media among Israelis compared to Germans.

-Insert table 4 here-

Ties with Russia and Ukraine positively influenced Ukrainian media consumption, indicating a nuanced engagement based on national ties, with Israelis consuming more Ukrainian media than Germans.

### **Discussion**

The current study highlighted that despite cultural and geographical differences, Germans and Israelis exhibit similar patterns in seeking information about the war, particularly in traditional media channels. Those with more substantial ties to Ukraine showed increased motivation to follow the conflict, underscoring the impact of personal connections on information-seeking behavior.

Conventional media platforms such as TV, radio, newspapers, and news websites continue to be significant sources of information for people in both countries. This persistence of legacy media use in an age of diverse media options is noteworthy and supports the ongoing relevance of these platforms.

Despite their availability, it was evident that alternative sources were not the primary channels for war information. However, Israelis demonstrated a greater tendency than Germans to consult international news sources, which might reflect Israel's position and interests in the global political landscape.

Germans reported higher overall media consumption, which could be interpreted as a heightened interest or concern due to Germany's geographical proximity to the conflict. This finding is consistent with literature that posits a connection between engagement with foreign events and local implications. In Germany, concrete ties to Russia and Ukraine were more strongly associated with social media usage, while in Israel, both tangible ties and perceived cultural or emotional proximity influenced the use of social media.

The findings indicate that these forms of proximity can differentially influence media consumption, although further research is warranted to disentangle their effects more fully.

The study acknowledges limitations, including a focus on consumption frequency rather than content analysis and the influence of Ukrainian refugees on public opinion and media consumption in host countries. Future research should explore these dimensions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of media engagement during international crises.

The study illustrates the complex interplay between individual ties to foreign countries and perceptions of proximity. These factors collectively influence media use during significant geopolitical events, highlighting the importance of considering a range of personal and contextual factors when examining media consumption patterns.

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### ***Vulnerability to Populism in the Proximity of War. Romania, Poland, and Hungary Compared***

Everywhere around the world, the war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has taken public opinion aback. As expected, in Europe most concerns came from states bordering Ukraine, the citizens of which feared the war might spill over onto the territory of their own countries. Unsurprisingly, the war generated a swirl of political communication effects, among which fake news, disinformation, and populist appeals, in times of mounting public pressure over how state institutions and the European Union should react (Anghel & Jones, 2022). In many cases, poor public communication fuelled a sense of disbelief in the competence, fairness, or even honesty of authorities. In addition, perceptions over the war were influenced by a growing number of alternative lines of knowledge circulation, often contradicting official statements and adding to the sentiment of lack of security (Kreft et al., 2023).

Thus, the unfolding of the conflict in Ukraine pulled together a favourable context for the emergence of new populist narratives in Eastern Europe, many of them scapegoating the European Union and NATO (Gentile & Kragh, 2022). In Hungary, Viktor Orban supported the idea that the war is not so much between Ukraine and Russia, but rather between those who want conflict and those who support peace, many times delineating himself from the European Union, which he framed as belonging to the first camp. Moreover, the war provided a propitious occasion for Orban to signal an unabashed admiration for Putin's illiberal values, as opposed to what the European Union stands for (Lamour, 2023). In Poland, although admiration for Russia remains very low, the populist discourse rests on anti-Ukrainian tropes, with claims that Ukrainian refugees receive too much financial and social support, at the expense of ordinary Poles – which are thus deprived from the money they deserve from their national Government and the European Union. The support for Ukraine has been weaponised to foster populist attitudes across the region, as it drove populist parties' supporters to criticise welfare chauvinism and economic protectionism and to garner support for Russia (Havlík & Kluknavská, 2023). In addition, organisations suspected of having connections with Russia are trying to disseminate the slogan "this is not our war", criticising the involvement of NATO and of the EU, as well as warning against a possible escalation of the war into a conflict that might directly involve Poland. A similar situation is to be found in Romania, where Russophobic popular sentiment was characteristic ever since the communist regime (Tsygankov, 2009). However, political discourses surrounding refugees from Ukraine influenced the public perception of deservingness of protection (De Coninck, 2022). After initially portraying refugees as dominantly female, underaged, or senior and therefore perceived as rightful beneficiaries of protection and not as security threats, thus increasing their acceptance (Zawadzka-Paluckta, 2022), refugees later turned into targets of the populist Eurosceptic discourse (Stoica & Voina, 2023).

In an attempt to understand public adherence to such narratives in times of crisis, scientific literature points to a number of variables, among which anger (Rico et al., 2017), anxiety and fear (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). More recent studies found out that proclivity towards populism is explained by acceptance of conspiracy theories, increased credulity of politically neutral news items, nonsense receptivity, and paranormal beliefs (Van Prooijen et al., 2022), as well as cynicism, powerlessness, and zero-sum thinking among individuals feeling politically disempowered (Papaioannou et al., 2023). Conspiratorial thinking is strongly linked to political distrust (Christner, 2022), even more so in countries where government representatives engage conspiracy theories in their communication strategies (Schlippshak et al., 2022).

However, given the ongoing nature of the war in Ukraine, there is little scientific evidence related to which of the existing populist narratives have more traction, especially in countries neighbouring the conflict – considering the circumstance they bear the brunt of hybrid warfare. As such, the current paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

		<p>RQ1: What are the main populist narratives disseminated in Romania, Poland, and Hungary since the start of the war in Ukraine?</p> <p>RQ2: Which of the populist narratives disseminated in Romania, Poland, and Hungary weight more in shaping the perceptions of citizens in times of neighbouring war?</p> <p>To answer RQ1, the current paper employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) on a variety of social media sources that have disseminated the populist discourse in Poland, Romania, and Hungary since the start of the war in neighbouring Ukraine. The research adheres to the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) which has been extensively used in the study of populism (Sengul, 2019). Based on the definition of populism as a political communication strategy that presents politics to be a struggle between the many but powerless People against the few but powerful elites (Hawkins &amp; Kaltwasser, 2017; Stoica, 2021), the current research identifies narratives that frame ‘elites’ on the one side and ‘the People’ on the other in the populist discourse across the three countries since February 24th, 2022 (the start of the war in Ukraine). We also highlight similarities and differences between the populist discourse in the three countries, as part of a comparative approach.</p> <p>To answer RQ2, we make use of an original set of public opinion data (N = 8,743) collected through a political compass disseminated via social media in Romania, Hungary, and Poland since the start of the war. Using the data, we test which of the narratives identified for RQ1 trigger most support for populist narratives in these three countries. The variables were drawn from the narratives identified for RQ1, and include attitudes towards the European Union, fears related to a ‘spill-over effect’ of the war, attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees, the logic of a ‘zero-sum’ war, simple-mindedness, and need for protection. We therefore seek to bring a significant contribution to the concept of ‘vulnerability to populism’ (Stoica, 2023), by understanding it in the context of the war. We consider people who manifest propensity to accept and multiply such narratives to be vulnerable to populism. By comparing the data, we also develop a nuanced understanding over what drives people towards the new narratives of populism in these three countries in the vicinity of the war. We also tap into the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, their political preferences, ideological and economic perspectives, as well as worldviews.</p> <p>Romania, Poland, and Hungary are relevant case studies for a comparative approach not only for their geographical proximity to the war, but also given the many differences in terms of political discourse and party competition, as well as the different attitudes related to the European Union and NATO. As such, the paper identifies which of the populist narratives align more with public perceptions in each of the three countries. We then compare the results, bringing forth a nuanced image of political communication in times of crises. Moreover, the ambition that underpins the entire approach of the paper is that of bringing a contribution to identifying the profile of people with a high receptivity to populism during unprecedented times for Europe and the world since World War II.</p>
	<p>Shukrullah Aadil (Punjabi University, Patiala); Amanpreet Randhawa (Punjabi University, Patiala)</p>	<p><b><i>Rise of Taliban in 2021: Emergence of Online Journalism in Afghanistan</i></b></p> <p>The fall of Kabul to the Taliban on 15 August 2021 radically changed political, social and economic scenario in Afghanistan. This regime change sent ripples around the world. The media sector in Afghanistan had to bear the brunt as well. The present study is aimed at exploring the phenomenon of online journalism in Afghanistan. An effort has been made to identify and understand the changing media landscape. To unearth the challenges faced by the journalists reporting from Taliban governed provinces. A mixed methodology was adopted to fulfill these objectives. The content analysis of official/government websites pertaining to media sector was done. Structured interviews of senior Afghan journalists were also conducted.</p>

		<p>According to Nai an NGO and the supporter of Free Media in Afghanistan journalism and media sector in Afghanistan had experienced an exponential growth since 2001, a total of 483 media outlets comprising 190 Radio Stations; popular ones included; Ariana FM, Arman FM, Radio Afghanistan public, SalamWatandar FM'. 96 Television Channels namely TOLO news, TOLO, 1TV, Aryana, and Lemar enjoyed high popularity. 183 Print Media organizations that included the likes of Etilaatroz, 8 Subh, Afghanistan Times Daily, The Kabul Times Daily and Mandgar. The number of active internet users in Afghanistan before the Taliban rule was about 9 million. However, according to Media Facilitating Organizations report in 2023; many media outlets were facing closure and numerous journalists were facing unemployment. Reporters Without Border (RSF) in August 2023 reported that new regime imposed several restrictions on journalists and media sector in Afghanistan. Within the short span of three months as many as 43% of Afghan media outlets disappeared and seized to exist. Out of the 10,780 people working in Afghan newsrooms (8,290 men and 2,490 women) at the beginning of August, only 4,360 were still working in December (3,950 men and 410 women) this translates to four out of ten journalists. Proportionally, women have been much more affected; more than four in five (84%) have lost their jobs since the arrival of the Taliban, whereas only one in two men (52%) had been affected. RSF report shows Afghanistan is still one of the insecure countries for journalists across the world. Access to information and lack of experience are other obstacles that reporters suffer.</p> <p>Government spokesperson and acting Deputy Minister, Information and Culture of Taliban said that they have introduced reforms for Afghan Media Sector and the creation of a Media Offences Verification Commission was also being considered. The official further added that the Press Laws enacted in March 2015 were still enforced. Law pertaining to Access to Information in Afghanistan was one of the privileges available to the journalists. However, due to imposition of restrictions on the media and media workers like wearing of mask by women journalists, ban on women from pursuing higher education. There would prevent women for joining the work force in journalism and media organisations. UNESCO had appealed to the Taliban government to ensure the freedom of media and journalists. UNESCO also came forward in support of the Right to Free Speech, the journalists' rights to their own freedom and safety while defending press freedom in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The researcher conducted structured interviews of senior Afghan Journalists. Major findings of the study included the lack of security, financial problems, and lack of access to information as the challenges being faced by the journalists Afghanistan. Almost half of the respondents are terrified, crushed, and despondent. A significant number of respondents had fled to other countries in Europe and North America. Besides these restrictions and challenges, many journalists admitted that the activities of online media are increasing day by day in Afghanistan while most of their activities are abroad nowadays. Online Journalism had provided better for opportunities to journalists and media workers. The journalists found online platforms to be more secure. At the same time digital platforms provide an easy access to information and better connectivity with target audience member. The journalists in Afghanistan were embracing online journalism. The Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan also supports this new development. Afghanistan has experienced a revolution in digital and online media. Active internet users now had access to news in their preferred language Phasto and Persian. News agencies were using online platforms (X, YouTube, Websites, Facebook, Instagram and etc.) for dissemination of news.</p>
	<p>Barbara Ravbar (Charles University)</p>	<p><b><i>Silenced Voices: How Croatian Online Media Reported on the Ukrainian Refugees</i></b></p> <p><b>CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b></p> <p>Although Croatia has been part of the European Union since 2013, “during the past two decades, the country experienced independence, war, and transformation of its one-party political system and socialist economy to a market economy and a multiparty political system” (Peruško, 2013, p. 709). These circumstances have shaped the media outcome we see today, on</p>

top of the multiple crises the country has faced in the past two years. During the COVID crisis, the only type of media that increased revenue was online news outlets, enabling users with a constant influx of information, which, correspondingly, stirred up the discussion on the importance of questioning the millions of messages users encounter daily. To cut down the influx of daily messages into coherent and informative news packages, the role of journalists as gatekeepers is crucial. They follow “certain standardized and centralized rules in gatekeeping to make sense of the world and provide an overview of ‘important’ events that they believe their readers seek and need” (Al-Rawi, 2018, p. 3). Besides selecting news items, they decide which sources should be chosen in their coverage, which is a crucial part of gatekeeping practices (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), especially in times of wartime crisis, when reporting on humanitarian and refugee issues. As refugees are “universalized visually in the media and other public areas” (Mannik, 2012, p. 273), their predominance in media representation determines how we see and perceive them and their struggles. Multiple studies show that the “voices of the refugees are heard less often than those of politicians and experts” (Sumuvuori et al., 2017, p. 34) and that they are often “given limited opportunities to speak of their experiences and suffering” (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 17). Popović et al. (2022) found that the media in Croatia primarily relies on official sources in reporting, thus uncritically supporting the dominant official policy of actors in power. They also found that refugees are predominantly reported negatively, mainly due to sensationalism and excessive dramatization, concluding that the refugee issues were often reported in a simplified manner and based on insufficiently verified information.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study aimed to identify the two most-read Croatian online news portals in 2022, Index.hr and 24sata.hr (<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/croatia>) reported about Ukrainian refugees while reporting on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Following the main objective of the research, this study investigates:

RQ1: What sources did journalists use when reporting on the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

RQ2: Did the journalists express value judgments when reporting on the topic?

RQ3: In what context did the journalists report about the Ukrainian refugees?

The research method used was quantitative content analysis, a “method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative way” (Kerlinger, 2000, according to Wimmer and Dominick, 2010, p. 156). Quantitative content analysis can provide numerical descriptions of large chunks of data, and what distinguishes it from other methods is “systematic observation and quantification of patterns in texts” (Coe & Scacco, 2017, p. 1). Using quantitative content analysis in this research means providing an extensive set of codes to observe and analyze patterns on a larger scale. Before coding started, a coding list was made to analyze the data.

This research considered all articles published on the two chosen news portals from February 24th (when the Russian invasion of Ukraine officially started) to March 24th, 2022. As the unit of analysis in this research, a journalistic piece was taken, which includes the text and associated equipment. Because of the researcher’s particular interest in reporting on refugees, this study included all articles marked with hashtags #Ukraine (Croatian: #Ukrajina) and #refugees (Croatian: #izbjeglice). The search was conducted using the news portal’s websites. Under these hashtags and in the chosen timeframe, the total number of researched articles was 491 (N=491).



## RESULTS

In the chosen timeframe, Index.hr published 272 online articles in total. Most often, in 26.1% of published articles, Index.hr used cover photos that showed wartime, such as pictures that showed battles and soldiers, and refugees were in the photos in 17.7% of cases.

GRAPH 1: Photographs used by Index.hr

As expected, the most extensive number of articles were dedicated to Ukrainian refugees (21.7%), but they were interlocutors in only 2.6% of articles. That indicates that they were mostly talked about but did not get the chance to be creators of their own stories and discourses surrounding them. When mentioned, it was mainly in the context of refugees' struggles to run from the occupied territory (in 12.5% of articles) and being victims of the invasion (in 13.6%).

GRAPH 2: Sources used in the articles published by Index.hr.

24sata.hr published a total of 235 articles. Because some articles were published behind a closed paywall, they were excluded, totaling 219 analyzed articles. Most of the cover photos used by 24sata.hr in their articles showed refugees (46.6%), and the main topic was Ukrainian refugees (65.6%), but similar to Index.hr, most used sources (22.8%) were official statements. Because redaction of 24sata.hr sent their journalists to report from the Ukrainian border, they had more access to civilians, volunteers, and refugees, who were represented with 10% each.

GRAPH 3: Photographs used by 24sata.hr

24sata.hr mainly reported on refugees in the context of them finding a home in another country (40.6%), which included stories about their integration, reuniting with families, and gratefulness to their hosts for taking them in. In 37.8% of the cases, they were portrayed as helpless victims of the war. They were mentioned as 'others', people who are talked about but do not talk about themselves. The policies and actions were brought up for them, but not in collaboration with them. Their voices were mainly quieted, and they were asked for statements only in 'heartwarming' stories, not those that discussed broader political or economic impact on their lives.

GRAPH 4: Main sources by 24sata.hr

## DISCUSSION

Analysis of headline photographs showed that 24sata.hr put greater emphasis on showing the invasion of Ukraine through the experiences of refugees, while Index.hr mostly used screenshots of pictures posted in real-time on social media, mainly Twitter. Both newsrooms' most used sources (RQ1) were official statements, usually provided by governments, local governmental bodies, and NGOs. Although the majority of published articles had refugees' and their issues in their focus, refugees were news sources in less than 6% of them. When reporting about issues regarding their accommodation and health, many articles consulted politicians and referred to the refugees as 'others,' people who were talked about but were not given their voices. When reporting from the border, 24sata.hr included more refugees as their interlocutors, but their statements were mainly emotionally charged and used as clickbait headlines.

GRAPH 5: Context and portrayal of refugees

The graph above shows that journalists mainly reported on Ukrainian refugees in the context of finding a home in another country (RQ3), and the second most represented category was their struggle to run from the occupied territory, which was the topic most refugees gave statements about. In these stories, their hardships and struggles were emphasized, and the refugees were portrayed as helpless victims. The category 'Something else' refers to mentioning the refugees in the articles but not portraying them in any specific way. This usually happened when discussing policies and help that should be appointed

		<p>to them, making the refugees the category of others to whom something is done and not those who are active participants and creators of their conditions.</p> <p>42% of all analyzed articles showed value judgments (RQ2), and the position of the journalists was mostly visible through quoting only Ukrainian sources in the texts, quoting politicians who are standing with Ukraine and showing open support, and writing positively about Ukrainian war efforts. The other way of showing support was by sharing the pictures and experiences of the refugees. These were usually heartwarming stories about Ukrainians who saved their pets from war zones, reunited friends, and Croatian people showing their support by traveling to the Ukrainian border and taking the refugees to safety.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION</b></p> <p>In correlation with previous studies on this topic (Popović et al., 2022; Georgiou &amp; Zaborowski, 2017; Sumuvuori et al., 2017), this study showed that Croatian media also uses mainly official statements as their primary news sources. Although refugees were the main topic of the story, in the majority of news pieces, they were not given voices, and their stories were sometimes framed in a sensationalist way, dramatizing their experiences and victimizing them further. Their experiences from the border journalists were vividly described, but when writing about their experiences, the refugees were mostly portrayed as victims. This research shows that the Croatian media system shows some of the problems other European media systems face. There are existing recommendations for journalistic reporting on refugees, which should be considered, and more attention should be paid to them. Ethical principles of the journalistic practice should not be lost in the everyday time battle with other newsrooms. Instead, implementing systematic and thorough education on human rights should become essential when reporting on humanitarian crises and conflict areas.</p>
11:45-13:15	<p><b>1.3 ECREA: AI-based Manipulations: How to Resist?</b>  <b>Chairs: Tomasz Gackowski, Jacek Wasilewski</b></p> <p>Room 1.128</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p>
	Caja Thimm (University of Bonn)	<p><b><i>AI-based Mediatization of the Public Sphere: Introducing AI Literacy and Technological Sovereignty as Educational Tasks</i></b></p> <p>At the end of 2022, the text-based AI developed by OpenAI, known as “ChatGPT” was released as a free version, significantly impacting the digital world. It not only revolutionized the digital landscape with its simple, globally accessible user interface but also surprised even staunch AI skeptics with its interactive capabilities. In a short period, such generative AI models (LGAIMs) have transformed the way we communicate, illustrate, and do recherche (Farrokhnia et al., 2023). Current challenges include issues like discriminatory or biased responses, including so-called “hallucinated” results, where the AI generates content and even defends it upon further inquiry.</p> <p>The ease with which these models can also generate images, as demonstrated by examples such as the supposed arrest of Donald Trump or the image of the Pope dressed in a flashy winter coat for media attention, highlights a problematic potential for disinformation. Additionally, there are significant implications for decision-making, as AI systems are increasingly being used to make important decisions in fields like finance, healthcare, and justice. This development has brought forth a bundle of challenges not only for individuals but also for politics, education, the economy, the rule of law, and journalism. A particular</p>

concern is the idea that such technologies might deepen the 'digital divide' and increase social inequality (Himmelreich & Lim, 2022). As Zembylas (2023) points out this not only refers to disadvantaged social groups, but should be seen systematically under the concept of "decolonial thinking". He calls for a "decolonial approach to AI" for higher education, teaching and learning.

Recent contributions on processes of digital transformation of the public sphere (Habermas, 2021) and on cultures and practices of digital participation illustrate the massive transformation process of traditions publics, now also shaped by AI tools. The boundaries between individual, group and mass communication blur, thereby forming "mini-publics" with specific interests, members and discourse styles (Thimm, 2017). In particular, the commodification of the public sphere is a significant factor in the 'third structural transformation of the public sphere' (Habermas). Social media, for example, can be understood as infrastructures of public opinion formation, but also as a place of post-truth discourses on scientific and political issues. For Habermas, this results in the fundamental problem of a public sphere that is no longer inclusive, but is the cause for uncertainty and, above all, the "spreading of fake news". This form of data-based digital life, particularly under the influence of new technologies like AI is now widely discussed and poses significant ethical challenges not only democracies but also particularly, for education.

In order to respond to these mounting challenges for education, scholars have begun to discuss the emerging term "AI literacy". As Long & Magerko (2020) point out, this form of literacy needs to include a new perspective on the competencies users need in order to effectively interact with and critically evaluate AI. AI literacy, however, needs to address approaches which include a new set of demands, skills and social settings. And it calls for a new perspective on the term 'media': Can artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E, the AI variant for image creation, social robots or automated vehicles, which will be nothing but rolling computers, still be described and analyzed with the existing theories on media production, media usage and media reception? Just as one had to question the concept of media competence in the 80s or 90s, the same is now consequently true for the concept of 'media literacy'. It will therefore be argued that a modern (digital) pedagogy oriented towards digital and AI technologies should look at technology sovereignty as a concept which can help to analyze individual, structural and political perspectives on literacies for the digital age and opens up a new field, in which pedagogy has hardly played a role so far. The paper wants to discuss this position and will lay out a broader approach towards technological sovereignty, which aims to encompass media and digital literacy as well as the new specifics of AI literacy.

The study: AI Literacy and technological sovereignty as pedagogical concepts

To give an example on the practical consequences in more detail, a comprehensive survey was conducted in Germany ("D21 Digital Index"). The survey covered the German-speaking population with at least one child in school resp. schoolchildren themselves (n= 1.589) The results showed severe problems with teachers' and students' lack of digital skills, lack of support from the school, too few or too old devices available, and problems with complicated tools/software. Similar results were obtained in other European countries. Hence, one of the goals in order to furnish the young generation for future challenges must be the integration of AI-Literacy into the European 'Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp)'.

How this could be done will be shown by a study on a new school subject "Digital World", which was introduced in a pilot phase at 25 schools in Germany. The content of the program surpasses the traditional skills approach and includes reflections on the digital public sphere, as well as on manipulation and disinformation, combined with economic, political and ecological education and, particularly, with a strong focus on digital literacy, data protection and algorithms.

		<p>It will be discussed how AI-Literacy can be developed further and how it could be integrated into the education system in Europe</p>
	<p>Migle Bareikyte; Mykola Makhortykh (University of Bern)</p>	<p><b><i>War bias: Auditing how Western and Russian image-generative AI models represent the war in Ukraine</i></b></p> <p>The rise of generative forms of artificial intelligence (AI) transforms different areas of communication. The ease of producing content using text (e.g. chatGPT) and image-focused AIs (e.g. Midjourney) enables new possibilities for individuals to get informed about and represent a broad range of societal phenomena, including historical and recent instances of mass violence (Makhortykh et al., 2023; Walden, 2023). However, the same capacities of generative AI models make them a potent tool for misleading the public either due to the malfunctioning of the models that can result in their erroneous performance (e.g. in the form of ‘hallucinations’; Alkaissi &amp; McFarlane, 2023) or the presence of vulnerabilities which can be exploited by the malicious actors (e.g. via the so-called ‘jailbreaking’; Li et al., 2023).</p> <p>These risks are particularly concerning in the context of modern wars, where the potential of AI to facilitate the manipulation of public opinion through deliberately false textual or visual representations can be used for a broad range of purposes. These purposes vary from undermining the morale of the troops via false surrender claims allegedly made by their leadership (Allen, 2022) to damaging the reputation of political leaders via strategic use of deception (Twomey et al., 2023) to subjugating information about certain aspects of the war such as war crimes (Urman &amp; Makhortykh, 2023). The image-focused generative AI is of particular relevance in this context due to the potential of visual images to communicate meanings, transmit affect, and form memories, particularly regarding topics which may be difficult to express verbally (Bleiker, 2018; Liv &amp; Greenbaum, 2020).</p> <p>Currently, the subject of uses and abuses of generative AI in the context of modern wars remains under-studied. However, we argue that addressing this gap is of paramount importance, considering the growing amount of evidence of the potential of generative AI models to propagate the distorted representation of social reality. This evidence originates from the developing field of research on social bias in AI models (e.g. Cho et al., 2023; Naik &amp; Nushi, 2023; Ray, 2023; Urman &amp; Makhortykh, 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Understood as a systematic skewness of outputs towards specific social groups distinguished by particular characteristics, social bias has been shown to affect AI model outputs in different contexts: from the representation of professional vocations (Cho et al., 2023) to the mediatization of stereotypes regarding “everyday situations” (Naik &amp; Nushi, 2023, p. 5). Depending on the characteristics of the vulnerable/privileged group, different forms of social bias can be identified with research primarily focusing on two forms - i.e. racial and gender bias - which are often investigated together (e.g. Cho et al., 2023; Naik &amp; Nushi, 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). The consequences of social bias can vary from under-representation to active discrimination of vulnerable groups (e.g. women or people of colour; Noble, 2018).</p> <p>The representation of war and mass violence is one of those areas where social bias is particularly dangerous. In times of intensified digitalisation and datafication, biased depictions of war may lead to increasingly polarised perceptions of war produced and consumed by fragmented groups of users. In some cases, such depictions may contribute to the dehumanisation and objectification of the specific social groups involved in the war, for instance, by generating sexualised images of women to reiterate the stereotype of them being treated as war trophies or attributing animal-like features to the enemy soldiers. Another example of such biased depictions comprises specific visual or textual representations of war spaces, including selective or manipulated depictions of built or destroyed vital infrastructure, which can be shared on social media platforms to incite affective responses. Such representations of war zones can then serve the political positions of specific</p>

states, regimes, or ideological groups, reinforcing specific geopolitical narratives about the spatial reproduction of power (Toal, 1996; Lewis, 2018).

Additionally, a more recent and relatively under-studied form of social bias in AI systems is the political bias, which relates to the differentiated treatment of specific political ideologies and their adherents (Hartmann et al., 2023; Rutinowski et al., 2023). Such bias can contribute to the censorship or constraints of AI model outputs that might not only limit the freedom of expression of AI users but also contribute to the subjugation or manipulation of information which is viewed as undesired by a specific group of political actors, including possible perpetrators of war crimes. One example of such political bias can be the prevention of the model from generating outputs on specific topics (e.g. regarding specific instances of the war) or whitewashed representation of the war violence (e.g. through images erasing traces of urban destruction).

The above-mentioned concerns about different forms of social bias in AI systems in the context of modern wars stress the importance of its continuous investigation. For this aim, we pose the following research questions which we strive to address in this paper: Are there evidence of specific forms of social bias in how image-generative AI models depict contemporary wars? What aspects of war representation does this bias primarily affect? And how does it relate to the relations of power influencing war mediatisation?

To address these questions, we conduct AI audits of two popular image-focused AI models— Midjourney and Kandinsky— regarding their representation of the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine. AI auditing is an emerging research technique used to investigate the behaviour of AI entities and determine whether it is consistent with existing norms and regulations (Mökander, 2023). Similar to its predecessor field—i.e. algorithm auditing (Mittelstand, 2016; Bandy, 2021)—AI audits rely on the systematic examination of the system performance, usually by investigating the outputs of the systems and their variation depending on the user inputs. Such an examination is particularly relevant for investigating the presence of bias in system outputs and the factors which can influence its pervasiveness.

Our selection of the AI models is due to the fact that they allow us to investigate the presence of not only traditional forms of social bias applicable to war representation (e.g. gender bias) but also less studied forms of bias, in particular political bias. Considering that Kandinsky is developed by the Russian state-owned financial company, Sberbank, we expect it to be likely to be subjected to political bias. For implementing the audit, we focus predominantly on AI representations of Russia’s war in Ukraine with special attention to the spatial representations of the war, namely, the Ukrainian cities attacked, destroyed, and occupied by the Russian forces and the different war-related social groups related to them (e.g. civilian population, defenders and assailants). For this, we develop a set of prompts that focus on intensively (e.g. Mariupol) and not intensively (e.g. Popasna) urban war spaces in Ukraine, including both occupied (e.g. Lysychansk) and non-occupied (e.g. Kyiv) spaces. We supplement the prompts focusing exclusively on the urban spaces (e.g. “Kyiv war” or “Mariupol war”) with prompts inquiring about the representation of war-related social groups (e.g. “Mariupol war defenders”, “Mariupol war civilians”).

To investigate model outputs, we will use a custom-made codebook including several variables: 1) whether the model provides any output or reports that the prompt goes against its ethical guardrails; 2) whether the output of the model includes any features allowing to attribute it to the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war or it depicts content unrelated to it; 3) what spatial elements (e.g. images of destroyed buildings, streets, soldiers, or civilians; from which perspective, e.g. birds-eye view or situated) are present in the outputs of models which are relevant to the ongoing war; 4) what are the demographic characteristics (e.g. age, sex, and race) of humans depicted in the relevant model outputs. Our preliminary findings so far seem to indicate that the performance of Kandinsky seems to be subject to a political form of social bias due to it not only

		<p>often censoring war-related requests by providing generic outputs (e.g. images of flowers) but also often whitewashing the Russia-inflicted destruction by focusing on images of rebuilding and renewal in Russia-occupied cities.</p>
	<p>Phillip Engelhardt (University of Bonn)</p>	<p><b><i>Deep Mediatization of the Face: Public Attitudes towards Scopic Regimes of Facial Recognition Technology</i></b></p> <p>Personality prediction based on facial feature expression is no innovation by artificial intelligence. As an anthropological constant it has a social function enabling the non-verbal communication of internal states (of emotional exaltation) and facilitating the development of collective intentionality as a cornerstone of diversified coexistence (Meuter, 2010). However, in times of AI-based identification the role of the face in relation to personal identity is far more complex. Appearance-based personality prediction does not just function as an impulse for human evolution but plays a crucial part in the pseudo-scientific enactment of racial ideologies. Just like modern AI-systems, the school of physiognomy during the 18th and 19th century, for example, inferred character traits, future behaviour and inner turmoil from physical and especially facial appearance. And just like modern AI it sought certainty in numbers, measurements and in the objectivity provided by mathematical methodologies. Representatives advised law enforcement, assisted in the prediction, identification and capture of dangerous delinquents, and broadly embedded the notion of biological determinism in human self-definition (Gould, 2016). The measurement of cranial capacity, brain size, forehead torus, lip thickness or pain perception illustrated the differences between the races and approximates those inferior to the white man to primates or other animals (Lombroso, 1894). The school of physiognomy points to the concurrency of scientific progress and ethical regress and gains didactical relevance when we consider how FRTs conceptualize the relationship between body and identity. On a theoretical level, modern FRTs implement the findings of psychologist Paul Ekman from the 1960s (Bucher, 2022). The core project of the so-called Facial Expression Program (FEP) and the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) was the objectified identification of age, sex, cultural background, emotional states and identities based on facial measurements (Cohn &amp; De la Torre, 2015). Despite Ekman's attempts to locate the face within complex sociocultural relations (Ekman, 1988), FRTs pursue the premise of a causal nexus between emotional exaltation and somatic expression: the face is reduced to a surface of independent selfhood beyond cultural imprints and social practices. Faception, a tech-company based in Tel Aviv, has developed a FRT that is able to categorize facial appearances into different personality profiles ('classifiers'). CEO Shai Gilboa is quoted as saying that the human personality is "determined by our DNA and reflected in our face" (Bendel, 2018, 3). The company itself claims it would have identified the terrorists of the attacks in Paris in November 2015 with an accuracy of 80% (Meyer, 2016). With algorithmic surveillance, threats of discrimination and the security promises go hand in hand.</p> <p>Public attitudes towards FRTs reflect this ambivalence. Trust, acceptance and awareness are determined by a myriad of factors. Trust in the political institutions and private companies deploying FRTs, personal affinity towards technological innovation, awareness of previous surveillance state-efforts, fear of privacy violations and de-contextualized data use, lack of knowledge about the functionalities of artificial intelligence, and the possibility to consent among other factors are accompanied by different socio-cultural predispositions for example concerning the relationship between the public and the political system in place (Kostka et al., 2023). Furthermore, acceptance is extremely context- and use-case sensitive and varies internationally often peaking in non-western countries such as China and hitting its lowest mark in Europe (Kostka et al., 2021).</p> <p>The underlying ethical issues have a major impact on the process of public technology evaluation. Individuals in public spaces fear a violation of their privacy, the discrimination against already marginalized groups and the decontextualized use of their face for purposes not consented to (Ritchie et al., 2021). The manifold challenges of FRTs appear especially urgent considering</p>

their widespread application in combination with ubiquitous CCTV systems and their unobtrusive and non-invasive operability in comparison to other biometric procedures such as dactylograms or retina-scans (Ada Lovelace Institute, 2019). The landslide innovations of artificial intelligence in the 21st century announce a digital era “governed by identity” (Lyon, 2008, 500). As such, scandals like the racial profiling of people of colour may never be too obvious to criticize but are merely the symptom of a deeper problem.

Issues of trust and acceptance are a symptom of a re-negotiation of the body as a medium of the self. The figuration of personal identity is now embedded in a scopic regime that dissolves the separation between body and bodily information and institutionalizes a legible body-identity nexus as a social condition for participation in public life (Marciano, 2019). Bodies are defined “merely in terms of their sameness to other data” (Lyon, 2008, 507). The danger of FRTs lies in their potential to discriminate against the diversity of individual bodies and in their linear notion of somatic expression as an embodiment of identity. The mediatization of the face through the scopic regimes of FRT contains its reframing from a reciprocal interface of personal communication to a surface of intrinsic properties.

It is the task of socio-technical analysis to critically monitor how this digitization process redefines visibility, privacy and transparency. This contribution proposes a three-part theoretical critique of FRT-regimes that aims to rehabilitate the post-digital face as a marker of personal individuality.

1) The unidirectional nexus between intrinsic properties and facial appearance or expression reduces the face to a surface and isolates personal identity from co-constitutive processes of self-construction. This contribution will conceptualize the face as a medium involved in relational processes of impression management and interprets somatic appearance as a “distributed accomplishment” (Bucher, 2022, 643). This allows for the face to “appear beyond what is seen, beyond representation” and to “issue a call, an expression that fractures the surface” (Pinchevski, 2016, 198). Self-construction and the face-work associated with it (Goffman, 1967) do not happen outside of interaction and communication with technological infrastructures. Instead, the “networked self” (Papacharissi, 2019) will be described as “intricately related to digital media and their underlying infrastructures” (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 34).

2) Secondly, this contribution aims to outline the cultural implications of this relational rethinking of the face in times of advanced human-machine relations. FRTs and their scopic regimes participate in the individual act of self-construction and interfere with human agency and autonomy (Waelen, 2023; Kugler, 2023). Corresponding issues like privacy violations and algorithmic discrimination affect the autonomous somatic expression of identity in favour of a legible body surface – a process reflected in the public attitudes towards AI and FRT (Solarova et al., 2022). This contribution will provide a synoptic review of the relevant literature in order to define such cases of socio-technical identity formation as processes of deep mediatization (Hepp, 2020).

3) The relational approach to the socio-technical process of identity formation enables a theoretical understanding of how FRTs affect the self but cannot provide a normative critique of this transformation. Finally, with reference to Emmanuel Lévinas’ idea of ethical resistance, this critique will identify how artificial inclusion is implemented as a technological totalization of political categories and instead describe the face as an announcement of the other as absolute foreign to the relation to the same (Lévinas, 2008). The goal of this appeal is to emphasize ethical challenges within our socio-technical formations and under new forms of AI authority. Mediatization theory uncovers these challenges as a possible threat to our individual autonomy and as a consequence of AI innovation outside of a society-centered design paradigm (Hepp, 2020).

	<p>Ewa Nowak-Teter ( Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin)</p>	<p><b>“New media-mediatized” public opinion</b></p> <p>The introduction of new media, especially social media, into the public sphere was initially seen as a great opportunity to enlighten public opinion and enhance its role in political systems. However, we now know that the mediatization of public life brings with it both opportunities, including missed opportunities, as well as threats and risks associated with the 'fusion' of media technologies with the process of public opinion formation and expression. This fusion is based on a deeply mediatized public communication and makes the new media today not so much a tool as an 'organ' of public life (Schulz, 2014; Hepp 2020; Iosifidis &amp; Wheeler 2016; McGregor, 2019; Moeller et al., 2016; Camargo et al. 2021). The aim of the research is to critically analyse (1) how the process of mediatization interacts with the process of public opinion formation and expression, and (2) what opportunities and threats arise from this interrelation. The methodological framework of the study is based on a critical analysis of the literature on the subject, followed by corresponding case studies and real-life examples. The case studies relate to the issues presented below and make use of secondary statistical data analysis, content analysis and sentiment analysis.</p> <p>Initial observations on the opportunities offered by the 'new media-mediatization' of public opinion include: (1) a wider opening of the 'public window' for citizens as actors in political life (2) a widening of the space for political communication (a greater diversity of issues); (3) immediacy in access to information and better matching of its topics to the preferences of the audience, (4) a reduction of the problem of representation of citizens - the new media represent bottom-up expressed interests; (5) the new media users as 'agenda-setters' (although their agenda-setting power is weaker than that of large media organisations); (6) the ease of disclosure of scandals caused by the actions of public authorities (leaks and bottom-up disclosures). On the other hand, threats and risks include: (3) the communication space being to some extent 'hijacked' by illegal activities or remaining in a grey zone (hate speech, political extremism, covert propaganda campaigns); (7) the low credibility of unverified social media content as an essential source of information for many citizens; (8) the dominance of entertainment over information content in the social media environment and a gap between access to information and the ability to debate; (9) the inflation of scandals; (10) strong polarization of opinions due to the emotional nature of algorithmically driven news.</p>
<p>11:45-13:15</p>	<p><b>1.4 Innovative Approaches to Environmental Communication</b>  <b>Chair: Otylia Bieniek</b></p> <p>Room 1.132</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Julia Trzcińska (University of Wrocław)</p>	<p><b>Harmonizing Fandom and Environment: The Complex Nexus of K-Pop Enthusiasm in the Climate Crisis Era</b></p> <p>The objective of this presentation is to unveil preliminary insights gained from an in-depth analysis exploring fan engagement against the backdrop of the climate crisis. With a specific emphasis on K-Pop enthusiasts, I am delving into the fan behaviors that foster a sense of belonging within a fandom, all while considering the potential environmental repercussions of these activities.</p> <p>One pivotal facet of this analysis revolves around drawing parallels between fan practices and the strategies adopted by entertainment companies, thereby shedding light on both their shared objectives and the areas of discord in the face of ongoing environmental degradation.</p>



		<p>Engaging with the K-Pop fan community introduces a captivating paradox. On one hand, it necessitates significant digital literacy among its followers, particularly regarding content access and navigating a transnational online community. On the other hand, a substantial component of the fan experience revolves around the physical collection of albums and member photocards. This penchant for tangible collectibles is frequently nurtured by entertainment companies, which release albums in multiple versions, enticing fans to procure not only a single copy but multiple iterations of the same album. Furthermore, the global concert tours associated with the K-Pop industry contribute to the worldwide movement of people and equipment, prompting inquiries into their environmental impact.</p> <p>Concert tours also entail the production of promotional merchandise, with K-Pop's offerings being notably extensive. In addition to conventional items like T-shirts and bags, fans can acquire plastic fans, complete clothing sets, or even pajamas. The most formidable challenge appears to be curbing consumption practices entailing excessive buying, which emanate not only from entertainment companies but also from grassroots fan activities, such as meetings and events, often generating substantial quantities of single-use products. While transitioning entirely to digital solutions, such as streaming services, might seem like a viable solution, it is essential to recognize that these solutions are not energy-neutral and require careful scrutiny. This complexity underscores the multifaceted nature of the issue.</p> <p>Participating in a fan community offers several benefits, including a positive impact on one's mental well-being and the opportunity to form connections and construct a personal identity. However, a pertinent question arises: How can these benefits be enjoyed in a sustainable manner that doesn't perpetuate capitalist practices?</p> <p>All these considerations converge into a fundamental question: Can one be a devoted K-Pop fan while concurrently advocating for sustainable development and environmental preservation, or do these two pursuits inherently clash?</p> <p>To address this question comprehensively, my study will thoroughly examine fan practices, encompassing content analysis on social media, participant observation, and digital ethnography. Additionally, it will scrutinize the measures undertaken by music labels to mitigate their negative environmental footprint (content analysis of media discourse, as well as official strategies and statements). The ultimate aim is to identify potential areas of collaboration and to delineate where the goals and expectations of fans and entertainment companies sharply diverge within this intricate landscape.</p>
	<p>Marcin Łączyński (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Procedural rhetorics of climate threats. Serious game design as a tool in building climate change awareness</i></b></p> <p>This paper is focused on analyzing rhetorical strategies used in modern serious games published after 2010, oriented at promoting the awareness of climate change, adaptation to its effects, and mitigation of risks related to climate-related threats.</p> <p>The paper uses the framework of procedural rhetorics, a term coined by Ian Bogost (Bogost, 2008), and related to the structural relation between the game's procedural side (rules and mechanics, decision system dependencies, gamification elements, in-game processes and events), and the persuasive intention discernable in the resulting gameplay experience. As proposed by Bogost, the concept of procedural rhetorics emphasizes the ability of games to make arguments through their rules and procedures (Evans, 2011). This approach is particularly relevant in the context of climate change education, as it allows for the exploration of how game mechanics can be leveraged to communicate complex environmental issues. Games designed for climate change education have been shown to have a considerable impact, especially on climate change awareness (Bontchev et al., 2021). Furthermore, using challenging games has been empirically linked to increased student engagement and learning outcomes (Hamari et al., 2016). This suggests that the procedural design of games can significantly influence the effectiveness of climate change education initiatives. In the context of game-based learning, the design of</p>

		<p>educational games that allow for the analysis of how climate change is communicated through the games is crucial (Foltz et al., 2019). Additionally, serious games or games with a purpose other than pure entertainment have been highlighted as having a considerable impact, particularly in climate change education (Bontchev et al., 2021). This research analyzes 14 selected game titles published between 2010 and 2023 related to building climate change awareness and resilience.</p> <p>The research procedure presented in the paper included several steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Game selection and categorization: The games selected for the research were grouped based on their main medium (PC, online, mobile), used game mechanics, genre, target audience, and their declared educational or persuasive objectives related to climate change awareness or action.</li> <li>2. Gameplay analysis: the gameplay of selected games was analyzed in a qualitative analysis based on several areas of interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rules impact on optimal decision-making strategies</li> <li>- Mechanical representation of resources</li> <li>- Mechanical representation of decision-making actors</li> <li>- Realism in the simulation of environmental and social aspects of climate change</li> <li>- User Interface (UI) and its representation of environmental and social aspects of climate change</li> <li>- Narrative elements used in reference to climate threats</li> <li>- Player role and its centrality in the decision-making process</li> <li>- Level of player impact on the actual climate change represented in game</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Content analysis and worldbuilding analysis: this stage of analysis included the analysis of the descriptive, verbal layer of the game and focused on the analysis of messages related to the importance of climate change adaptation and mitigation.</li> </ol> <p>The main research questions in this project included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the intensity of using specific tools from procedural rhetorics to persuade the player of climate change gravity?</li> <li>2. What is the relation of the procedural and verbal layers of the game?</li> <li>3. Are there situations where the ludonarrative dissonance between gameplay and the world presented in the game occurs?</li> <li>4. Are there any situations in which the gameplay design impacts the realism of the climate change simulation and its effects?</li> </ol> <p>The research results will be presented comparatively, presenting various strategies of the serious game designers and analyzing their dependence on the medium, target audience and declared educational goals. The results will also be compared with the works of IGDA Climate Special Interest Group, titled "The Environmental Game Design Playbook", oriented as a manual and a reference for game designers working on climate change.</p>
	Angga Ariestya (IKSZ Charles University)	<p><b><i>Unveiling the Nuances of Hybrid Slow Fashion Movement: Navigating Slow Fashion Personal Identity Formation and Lifestyle through Online-Offline Activism</i></b></p> <p>In Southeast Asia, the fast fashion problem, which is one of the world's biggest industries with a negative sustainability impact, has recently been discussed. Based on the data, Southeast Asia has become a massive market for the fast fashion industry. It stimulates the growth in the apparel sector, valued at \$50 billion, across its six primary countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia. The growth raises sustainability problems in Southeast Asia's fashion industry that cannot be underestimated, such as environmental and social problems (fashion waste, plastic, and poor labour condition) (McKinsey &amp; Company, 2020). Thus, the slow fashion movement has emerged in response to sustainability problems (Ariestya et al., 2021; Hasbullah et al., 2022;</p>

Hassan et al., 2022; Suhud et al., 2020). In the digital era, the slow fashion movements are also growing exponentially with the presence of social media (Lee & Weder, 2021).

The study examined the hybrid slow fashion movement initiated by slow fashion organizations in Indonesia and Malaysia. It wanted to explore how organizations navigate slow fashion personal identity formation and consumption lifestyle via online and offline activism facilitated by social media. The unit of analysis is the two slow fashion organizations, namely Setali Indonesia, which encourages circular fashion with some activities, namely upcycling and recycling, and Kloth Circularity in Malaysia, which focuses on 5R (Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle fabric). Both organizations rely on Instagram to facilitate their activism. In doing the analysis, the study will take the theoretical framework of lifestyle movements (LMs), the logic of connective action, and the affordance of social media (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Craig, 2019; Haenfler et al., 2012).

Slow fashion movements challenge apparel firms to make efforts in sustainable design and production methods and educate consumers about consuming fashion, encouraging a sustainable lifestyle (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Lifestyles encompass people's everyday practices, such as consumption habits, leisure activities, or modes of speech and dress (Haenfler et al., 2012). In new social movements, lifestyle has a pivotal position as a significant form of expression in the movement. An example is the slow food movement, which emphasizes the revitalization of lifestyle and culture rather than pursuing political endeavors (Carty, 2015; Dobernig & Stagl, 2015). LMs encourage social change, mainly from a personal lifestyle change. It fosters individuals to integrate movement values into their lifestyle holistically, making movement activity more permanent. LMs' participants also engage in identity work, encompassing moral cultivation and personal identity in the context of collective identity. One of the lifestyle movement's manifestations is social responsibility, which promotes environmental and social sustainability through ethical consumption and daily habits (Haenfler et al., 2012).

Identity is a social change site for LMs. LM identities are flexible and changeable. Therefore, they often overlap with other social change-oriented identities, possibly connecting followers to other causes. Within LMs, collective identity helps individuals form morally consistent and meaningful personal identities. In any social movement, separating collective identity from personal identity is challenging. However, LMs encourage individuals to incorporate movement goals into everyday life activities that contribute to a morally coherent self. LMs participants seek integrity and authenticity by adhering to the idea that a person relates to everyday decisions (Haenfler et al., 2012).

Although LMs may exhibit a lower degree of involvement in organized movements, there are still specific ways by which consumers can be organized, such as through local initiatives, contrasting market logic, or alternative lifestyles (Wahlen & Laamanen, 2015). Lifestyles Movement Organizations (LMOs) are crucial in shaping and managing movements. They facilitate the development of leaders (mostly cultural entrepreneurs), fostering a sense of collective identity, refining the movement's ideology, coordinating public events and social networks, and mobilizing adherents to disseminate the movement's ideology. LMOs promote social objectives by encouraging individuals to adopt certain lifestyles to convert non-adherents into adherents and adherents to participants—LMOs structure LMs by promoting lifestyle changes (Haenfler et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, the development of digital communication technologies, such as social media, facilitates movement through networks for mobilizing, organizing, and coordinating actions (Castells, 2015). The emergence of the Internet has thus transformed society into a network society that is connected and interacts through a digital communication network (Castells, 2009, 2010, 2015). At this time, the propagation of social media also changes the mobilization and social movement process, which is more a connectivity action than a collective action because people can be easily connected intensively (Castells, 2015;

		<p>Yuliarti et al., 2020). They have emerged as a significant resource, opportunity, or alternative for organizations to facilitate collective action (Buechler, 2011).</p> <p>The need for old-fashioned meetings, issue brokering, and coalition building has been replaced gradually by the pragmatic emphasis on establishing large-scale, broadly inclusive, loosely tied protest networks to an organizational concept that has elevated the open space networks (Bennett &amp; Segerberg, 2013; Polletta, 2002). From the case study, collective and connective logic are separate logics pertaining to actions (Bennett &amp; Segerberg, 2013, p. 45). The logic of connective action foregrounds the recognition of digital media as platforms that facilitate the organization of events, blurring the distinction between public and private domains through the pervasive use of social media. Digital platforms that coordinate and scale interpersonal networks can enable collective action without formal organizations or exclusive collective action framings. In connective logic, public action becomes an act of personal expression and self-validation via sharing thoughts and actions in trustworthy connections (Bennett &amp; Segerberg, 2013).</p> <p>Based on the above introduction, there are two main questions will be discussed in this study as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the slow fashion organization navigate slow fashion personal identity formation and lifestyle?</li> <li>2. How does the hybrid slow fashion movement organized via online and offline activism facilitate this navigation?</li> </ol> <p>A qualitative approach with a case study will be performed in this study to answer the proposed research questions. A case study is an empirical investigation of the appropriate case by answering the question of how or why an exciting phenomenon. The case study in this research follows the multiple case study with a holistic approach (Yin, 2014). The data was collected through in-depth interviews with the members and the counterparts of the organizations, Setali Indonesia and Kloth Circularity, and the social media documentation. As many as 15 people were interviewed, namely, the founder/co-founder, operational manager, communication manager, social media manager, designer, recycling/upcycling artist, and sewer who are the members or counterparts of the organizations. Technique analysis of the qualitative data will be conducted by coding, from open to axial coding, and categorizing it into themes utilizing NVivo software. Afterward, the validity will be determined through triangulation of empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks.</p> <p>Since the study is in progress, the preliminary conclusion is that the slow fashion organizations navigate slow fashion personal identity formation and consumption lifestyle by establishing social enterprise with different aims in the case of Setali Indonesia and Kloth Circularity Malaysia. The social enterprise in Indonesia aims to establish an alternative market that enables consumers to cultivate their slow fashion personal identity and adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Meanwhile, the social enterprise in Malaysia is committed to solving the environmental issues arising from fast fashion industries, particularly the recycling of unwanted fabric waste, and is asking consumers to participate in donating unwanted fabrics.</p> <p>In this sense, the hybrid slow fashion action is facilitating the navigation due to its affordance and networks. Online and offline activism are not separable. Rather, they work intertwining in the network society. They support slow fashion organizations in promoting the identity and lifestyle of slow fashion as a viable and accessible option to solve environmental issues in the network. Thus, this study hypothetically states that the hybrid slow fashion movement can navigate the slow fashion personal identity formation and lifestyle, which tends to be a more sustainable lifestyle in the network society.</p>
	<p>Ewa Maslowska (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign); Chen Chen (University of Miami); Marijn</p>	<p><b><i>The Role of Immersive Experiences in the Effectiveness of Environmental Communication</i></b></p> <p>Climate change consequences pose significant global security, health, and financial risks, especially among vulnerable populations. While people are generally concern about climate change and poses positive attitudes toward pro-environmental behaviors, they often do not engage in such behaviors themselves. One reason may be that people perceive</p>

Meijers (University of Amsterdam); Ragnheiður Torfadóttir (Norwegian University of Science and Technology); Anke Wonneberger (University of Amsterdam)

climate change consequences as distant. This study investigates whether virtual reality can help increase pro-environmental behavioral intentions by shortening the distance between the consequences of climate change and the self.

Keywords: Climate change, virtual reality, fear appeal, spatial presence

Climate change consequences (e.g., droughts, heatwaves, wildfires) create global security, health, and financial risks, particularly among vulnerable populations (EPA, 2021; Patnaik et al., 2020). People in different countries are concerned about climate change and willing to try to reduce it (Bell et al., 2021). Still, they may not engage in pro-environmental behaviors (Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995). This concern-behavior gap has been explained by the tendency to think about climate change as distant (Lorenzoni et al., 2007). People are more likely to perceive climate change as a risk and show more pro-environmental behavioral intentions once they experience the consequences of it (Bradley & Reser, 2016; Spence et al., 2011; Van der Linden, 2015). While different strategies have been developed to encourage pro-environmental behaviors, including financial or social incentives (e.g., Nguyen-Van et al., 2021), they do not address the issue of the perceived distance. Therefore, we need communication strategies that can make the consequences of climate change more tangible, hopefully leading to more pro-environmental behaviors.

### **The Role of Virtual Reality in Stimulating Sustainable Behaviors**

Virtual reality (VR) can create safe but realistic experiences of climate change (Fauville et al., 2020). Immersive virtual experiences can affect psychological factors that are important for pro-environmental engagement, including beliefs, environmental concern and awareness, connectedness to nature, behavioral intentions, psychological distance, and risk perception (Buljat Raymond, 2022). Also, a study conducted by Hofman et al. (2021) showed that a VR experience could be as effective as a real-life experience when it comes to affecting conservation behaviors. Therefore, we expect that: (H1) Experiencing the consequences of climate change in VR will lead to more pro-environmental behavioral intentions than reading an article or watching a video.

### **The Underlying Mechanism**

The mechanism of the effect described in H1 has not been fully explained. Research shows that virtual simulation can increase subjective beliefs that are closer to actual risks (Fiore et al., 2009). VR can create a sense of presence (Innocenti, 2017). Breves & Heber (2020) show that immersive nature videos, compared to regular videos, can lead to a significantly stronger sense of spatial presence and commitment to the environment. Since VR technology can create quite realistic experiences, we expect that it can also increase the risk perceptions. Risk perception has been shown to be related to pro-environmental behaviors (Spence et al., 2011) and can play a significant role in triggering behavior change (Hartman et al., 2014). Finally, recently Meijers et al. (2023) found that participants experiencing climate change consequences in VR experienced more fear than those who watched a video or read an article and that fear mediated the effect on some behavioral intentions however not on the behavior itself. Building on the discussed research, we expect that the effects of VR experience on pro-environmental intentions can be explained by VR (H2) increasing the perceptions of spatial presence, (H3) leading to increased perceived threat and (RQ1) experience of fear, resulting in pro-environmental behavioral intentions.

### **Method**

In our approach, we followed Meijers et al. (2023), who conducted their study in the Netherlands. We aimed to replicate and extend the authors' findings in the U.S. We conducted a between-subjects experiment with randomized assignment to three conditions (articles, articles+2D video, articles+VR video).

Participants and Procedure

A total of 146 participants were recruited from a subject pool and a university-wide research newsletter (Nmale= 39, Nfemale= 106, Nnot\_disclosed=1, Mage=25.41, SDage=8.73). First, participants provided an informed consent and answered questions about their demographics, political views, eating habits. Next, participants read a magazine article aimed to increase (response) efficacy beliefs. The article advocated for pro-environmental behaviors: a reduction of dairy and meat consumption, and supporting pro-environmental organizations (Poore & Nemecek, 2018). Then participants read another article that used a fear appeal and explained the link between climate change and wildfires, and how wildfires are increasingly destructive not only in other countries but also locally in the U.S. After reading the articles, except for the articles only group, participants either watched a 2D video of a wildfire with real-time burning sound on a 24-inch desktop or experienced it in an Oculus VR headset presenting a 360-degree video. The 4.5 min. video captured a scheduled burn of pine tree forest in New Jersey in 2019 . Following the wildfire experience, participants completed a survey, measuring their perceived spatial presence, perceived fear and threat, and their behavioral intentions. Finally, participants were debriefed and thanked.

### **Measures**

Main measures included spatial presence (four items on a 7-point Likert scale; Tussyadiah, Wang, Jung, & Tom Dieck, 2018; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ), fear responses (five items, a 7-point Likert scale; Hartmann et al., 2014; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .94$ ), cognitive threat (10 items, 7-point Likert scale; Hunter & Rööös, 2016; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ ), behavioral intentions to reduce meat and dairy consumption (four items, a 7-point Likert scale; De Groot, Bleys, & Hudders, 2019; Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (meat) = .93; Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (dairy) = .91), behavioral intention to donate (imagine they get a 30USD voucher for their participation and to indicate whether they would keep 30USD, donate 30USD to charity or keep some money and donate some in increments of \$5).

### **Results**

We found that participants across the three conditions did not differ in their meat consumption intention ( $F(2,143) = .15, p = .86$ ) or dairy consumption intention ( $F(2,143) = .08, p = .921$ ). However, participants in the VR condition had a higher intention to donate ( $F(2,143) = 4.48, p = .013$ ). Therefore, H1 was supported for donation intention only, not for diet change intentions. Regarding H2, the results of a mediation model (PROCESS model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples, Hayes, 2017) showed that spatial presence did not mediate the effect of the condition (articles, articles+video, articles+VR) on participants' meat consumption intention. Spatial presence did not mediate the effect of the condition on participants' dairy consumption either. However, spatial presence did mediate the effect of condition on participants' donation intention. Participants in the VR condition felt more like they were present in the forest, and as a result they reported higher donation intentions (Table 1). Therefore, H2 is supported for donation intentions, but not for diet change intentions.

Table 1 about here

Regarding H3, a mediation model (PROCESS model 81 with 5,000 bootstrap samples, Hayes, 2017) showed that the indirect effect of condition on participants' meat consumption intention was not mediated by the spatial presence and perceived threat. Spatial presence and perceived threat did not mediate the indirect effect of condition on participants' dairy consumption intention or donation intention either (Table 2). H3 is rejected.

Table 2 about here

RQ1 was tested with the same mediation model as H3 and showed that, compared to the articles and video conditions, participants who experienced wildfire in VR reported higher spatial presence and more fear responses (Table 2). Furthermore,

		<p>spatial presence and fear fully mediated the effect of VR on participants' meat consumption intention and dairy consumption intention. However, spatial presence and fear responses did not mediate the effects of VR on user's donation intentions.</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>Our study shows that providing people with a VR experience of a climate change consequence - a wildfire (as compared to a 2D video and just reading articles) can directly increase donation intentions (but not intentions to make changes to one's diet). It also shows that the effect of VR experience is mediated by spatial presence, which leads to (1) donation intention, (2) experienced fear and intentions to change one's diet (but not to donate to a pro-environmental organization). VR did not affect perceived threat.</p> <p>These results bring up some interesting implications and questions. The results concerning VR and spatial presence confirm previous research (e.g., Meijers et al., 2023). We are not clear on why we did not see any effect on perceived threat. It may be due to the ceiling effect as our manipulation in articles was rather strong. Also, it seems that there is a different mechanism at play when it comes to changing one's diet vs donating, which should be further investigated. Future research may also include moderators, e.g., Americans' views on climate change have been shown to vary widely depending on where they live and their political opinions . We are currently analyzing data on participants' place of origin and political views and will be ready to present the results in March if accepted. Also, for a VR experience to have an impact, people should want to experience it (Fox et al., 2019), which could be a potential moderator as well.</p>
11:45-13:15	<p><b>1.5 Consequences of War in Media</b>  <b>Chairs: Agnieszka Stępińska</b></p> <p>Room 1.138</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Anna Yezhova ( Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin)</p>	<p><b><i>The role of Russian media and propaganda in the information environment of the temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhia region</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>After the outbreak of full-scale armed conflict on February 24, 2022, approximately 70% of the territory of Zaporizhzhia region came under the control of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. These areas, lacking control from Ukraine, were placed under military-civilian administration by Russian occupiers, encompassing the Berdyansk region, Melitopol region, Polohy region, Vasylivka region, and Zaporizhzhia region. The population of these areas experiences challenging conditions on a daily basis: they are regularly subjected to shelling, acts of violence, and persecution by both the occupying authorities and the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. As early as May 2022, reports surfaced about the disappearance of mobile and internet services in the temporarily occupied areas. According to public reports, Russian soldiers used coercive measures, compelling Ukrainian internet providers to relinquish control over their networks. As a result, the Russian side gained control over the information space in areas outside Ukraine's control.</p> <p>According to research conducted by the Independent Non-Governmental Institute of Mass Information (IMI), the complete blocking of Ukrainian information channels allowed Russian propagandists to shape an alternative reality in the temporarily occupied territories and disseminate Russian propaganda media [1]. Consequently, the residents of Zaporizhzhia region were cut off from the information environment that existed before the onset of the full-scale war.</p>

The aim of this paper is to analyze the attitudes of residents of the temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhia region towards Russian media and propaganda and to identify the main themes of Russian propaganda. The research also addresses the following investigative questions:

- What information sources did recipients typically use to obtain news and information about events in Ukraine before the occupation and during the occupation?
- Did recipients use Russian information sources?
- What themes do Russian information sources convey in the temporarily occupied territory of Zaporizhzhia region?
- What strategies did residents of the temporarily occupied area use to differentiate between factual information and propaganda?
- Does age, education, and the size of the residential area influence residents' perceptions of Russian media and propaganda?

#### Literature review

Before the onset of the occupation, it can be confidently stated that the Zaporizhzhia region had a developed democratic society. According to research, an inherent element of a democratic society is public opinion. Characteristic factors of public opinion include freedom of speech, the functioning of non-dependent media outlets, and well-developed principles of social responsibility in governance [2].

However, with the beginning of the occupation, the situation changed. Representatives of the Russian occupation authorities attempted to forcibly coerce Ukrainian journalists into cooperation. Mass terror began, journalists were subjected to repression and persecution, and threats were often directed at them. In this way, Russian occupiers sought to intimidate media representatives and compel them to disseminate Kremlin propaganda. Such actions constitute a direct violation of press freedom, and the Russian side breached the Hague Conventions and Declaration, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Victims of War and its Additional Protocols, and the Convention on the Laws and Customs of Land Warfare, which provide security guarantees for journalists [3].

In addition to this, the Russian side employs information propaganda to influence public opinion and create conditions for support of the occupation regime. For the purposes of this work, a definition has been adopted in which propaganda is understood as „the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” [4].

Andrew Wilson, a researcher at the Aspen Institute, has categorized Russian propaganda into several categories. For example, the first category aims to create a state of paralysis through the use of propaganda. Another category focuses on influencing individuals who already hold established worldviews characterized by anti-system tendencies, guiding them in advantageous directions. For the purposes of this article, we will be interested in the category whose goal is to create an alternative reality where a specific media narrative is supported by political parties, non-governmental organizations, media outlets, and religious institutions. In this category, all entities follow the same narrative, and this narrative gains additional credibility through practical implementation [5].

Ilya Nuzov, Head of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Desk for the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), asserts that over the past two decades, Russian political elites have actively utilized memory laws to strengthen and nationalize their historical narrative, centered around the cult of war, particularly the Great Patriotic War [6].

However, such actions do not necessarily lead to the mass indoctrination of the population. Timothy Frye emphasizes the fact that recipients often choose which source to trust and why. Therefore, exposure to propagandistic information does not



necessarily result in full agreement or the acceptance of presented propagandistic ideas [7]. In the temporarily occupied territories, residents had a choice between Russian and Ukrainian media, which is why propaganda did not yield the desired results for the Russian side.

#### **Methodology and its challenges**

At this stage of the research, a qualitative online survey was utilized. The selection of this method was deliberate and aimed to gather extensive written responses to open-ended thematic questions. This method was chosen due to its ability to capture the richness of perspectives and experiences of participants regarding topics related to Russian propaganda in the temporarily occupied territory of Zaporizhzhia Oblast. The questions were thoughtfully crafted to unearth opinions, experiences, and narratives concerning Russian propaganda in the temporarily occupied territory of Zaporizhzhia region.

The open-ended questions were presented to participants in a written format. Participants were kindly asked to provide detailed responses to these questions to elucidate their perspectives or experiences. This format was chosen for its convenience and accessibility, allowing participants to freely respond at their own convenience and location. Each participant received a set of questions related to topics concerning Russian propaganda. This approach resulted in a diversity of responses, encompassing both concise and elaborate answers to the posed questions. This method provided an opportunity to capture the diversity of perspectives and experiences of each respondent [8]. It's important to note that the research on this topic is ongoing. The next stage will involve conducting in-depth interviews to gather more detailed information on the research topic.

#### **Participants**

At present, 30 individuals aged between 18 and 65 have participated in the study, all of whom lived in the territory of Zaporizhzhia region before and during its occupation. It is essential to underline that each participant in the study left the occupied territory. This indicates that participants possess a rich experience and firsthand knowledge of life in this region during various periods, rendering their opinions and narratives particularly valuable for understanding the political, social, and cultural dynamics in this context. This contributes to additional reliability and adequacy of the data obtained.

The decision to work with a limited number of participants in the study is explained by the complex situation in the temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhia region. Some invited individuals, concerned about the safety of their relatives and family members who remained in the occupied territory, declined to participate. Evidently, the current turmoil and uncertainty in the region compelled people to prioritize the safety of those they care about, which is entirely understandable under these circumstances. Such an approach not only protects the participants' data but also creates conditions for more open and honest responses to the survey questions.

#### **Present Results**

- Alteration in perceptions of information sources: the onset of the occupation of Zaporizhzhia region led to a change in residents' perception of information sources. During the occupation, respondents became more cautious and critical of information, avoiding Russian sources due to their association with the concept of propaganda.
- Objectives and themes of Russian propaganda: Participants' responses highlighted the main themes of Russian propaganda in the occupied territories. These themes include claims of Zaporizhzhia region belonging to Russia, accusations of betrayal from Ukraine and the international community, distortion of events, creation of a positive image of Russia, and identification of internal and external enemies in the region.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of Russian propaganda: According to Participants' responses, Russian propaganda aims to disseminate a specific ideology, manipulate, and disinform, emphasizing the importance of distinguishing factual information from propagandistic messages.</li> <li>• Development of differentiation strategies: Respondents developed their own strategies to distinguish factual information from propaganda, which became a significant aspect of their information literacy and critical thinking.</li> <li>• Significance of further research: Conducting further research on Russian propaganda in the occupied territories is crucial for a deeper analysis of its impact. This can contribute to information independence, increased information literacy, and resistance to the influence of propaganda.</li> </ul>
	<p>Krzysztof Wasilewski (Koszalin University of Technology)</p>	<p><b><i>Online media and the digitization of heritage in the times of war</i></b></p> <p>As various conflicts have proved, modern warfare aims at the destruction of not only military facilities but also of heritage sites. The former seem to be equally important in reaching military goals, being an important part of national identity and morale. Thus, destroying heritage sites may deprive an enemy of the crucial modern resources to continue the war. Afghanistan, Iraq and most recently Ukraine have demonstrated that heritage sites often become the first targets of military actions. In such cases the only institution that is capable of saving heritage are online media. Online media understood here as both professional journalist outlets and citizen media, are the first to alarm the world about the endangered heritage sites and, as a result, prevent the destruction. What is more, online media save heritage sites by using modern technology to transfer them to the cyberspace or by activating users to do that themselves.</p> <p>As such, the intersection of online media and the digitization of heritage has become increasingly crucial in contemporary society, particularly during times of war. Therefore, this research paper will delve into the multifaceted relationship between online platforms and the preservation of cultural heritage amidst the challenges posed by armed conflicts. As conflicts persist globally, the digital realm emerges as both a potential savior and a new battleground for safeguarding the rich tapestry of human history. The paper will first establish the context of the study, emphasizing the significance of cultural heritage as a repository of collective memory and identity. It will underscore the vulnerability of heritage sites during times of conflict, where physical destruction and looting pose existential threats to the artifacts and structures that embody a society's history. The advent of online media and digitization is explored as a transformative force capable of mitigating these threats, offering innovative solutions for documentation, preservation, and dissemination of cultural heritage. One key aspect of this research will involve an in-depth analysis of the role played by online platforms in the documentation of heritage sites during wartime. Digital technologies, including high-resolution imaging, 3D scanning, and virtual reality, have revolutionized the way heritage is recorded and shared. The paper examines case studies from conflict zones, highlighting successful instances where online media has been employed to create comprehensive digital archives, enabling the global community to experience and appreciate heritage even in the face of physical destruction. Furthermore, the paper will investigate the ethical considerations surrounding the digitization of heritage, particularly in the context of conflicts. Questions of ownership, access, and representation will be explored, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that respects the rights of communities while fostering international collaboration for the preservation of shared human heritage. The research delves into the challenges of navigating cultural sensitivity, addressing concerns related to the potential commodification and misuse of digitized heritage for political or commercial purposes. The study also sheds light on the role of online media in raising awareness and mobilizing support for the protection of cultural heritage in times of war. Social media platforms, in particular, have become powerful tools for advocacy, enabling individuals and organizations to amplify their voices and garner global attention to the</p>

		<p>plight of endangered heritage sites. The paper examines the impact of online campaigns and grassroots movements, illustrating how they contribute to shaping public discourse and influencing policymakers to prioritize heritage preservation in conflict zones. In addition to documenting and raising awareness, the research explores the educational potential of digitized heritage. Online platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for interactive learning experiences, allowing users to engage with historical artifacts and sites virtually. The paper discusses the implications of this shift for formal education, as well as the democratization of knowledge, ensuring that diverse audiences, regardless of geographical location, can access and appreciate the richness of global heritage. However, the paper also acknowledges the darker side of the digital realm during wartime, where online media can be weaponized for propaganda, misinformation, and the destruction of cultural heritage. The study will investigate instances where extremist groups exploit social media platforms to glorify the destruction of historical monuments, emphasizing the need for digital platforms to actively combat the misuse of their technologies. In conclusion, the proposed research paper will provide a comprehensive overview of the intricate relationship between online media and the digitization of heritage in the context of armed conflicts. It will highlight the transformative potential of digital technologies in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, while also addressing the ethical and practical challenges associated with these advancements.</p>
	<p>Somaya Shafiqi (Zhejiang University)</p>	<p><b><i>Media Framing of Afghanistan Peace Process: A Comparative Content Analysis of The Kabul Times and The New York Times</i></b></p> <p>Parallel to war and violence, there have always been efforts by the warring parties and other regional and international powers to establish peace.</p> <p>The research paper aims to explore how The Kabul Times, a government-owned newspaper of Afghanistan, and The New York Times, a U.S. newspaper, frame the Afghan process in their news coverage of U.S-Taliban peace talks.</p> <p>The following research employs generic frames using Entman's (1991) model to investigate how selected newspapers used these frames. This paper compares The Kabul Times and The New York Times to find the differences or similarities in their coverage. The quantitative content analysis guided by framing theory has been used, which helped the researcher study both countries' stances towards peace talks. One hundred fifty-six online news stories of the selected newspapers, i.e., The Kabul Times and The New York Times, have been analysed.</p> <p>Content analysis of the news revealed that the framing of Afghan peace talks in The Kabul Times is different from The New York Times. Results showed significant differences between the two selected newspapers' news reports concerning news frames, frequency of the coverage, tone of the news and source usage. The Kabul Times focused more on the "responsibility" frame, and The New York Times emphasised the "conflict" frame in their coverage of the talks. Furthermore, The Kabul Times' tone is negative toward the talk compared to The New York Times. Moreover, this study reveals that the negative tone of The Kabul Times was due to the previous Afghan government's aims to lead the peace talks with the Taliban instead of America. At the same time, the U.S. pushed on the U.S.-led talks and finally reached a deal with the Taliban. Moreover, the most dominant news sources for the newspapers of the United States and Afghanistan were government officials of the respective countries.</p> <p>As a result, finding a peace frame in this study is crucial to achieving better outcomes at the conclusion. Because all Afghans want a peaceful resolution to the Afghan conflicts and a stable future for Afghanistan, the national and international media</p>

		<p>play a critical role in creating a more conducive environment for peace negotiations. As a result, events should be portrayed in ways that provide an enabling climate for discourse, according to the peace journalism model, and need to be used in war zone contexts like Afghanistan.</p> <p>Keywords: Afghan Conflict, Media and Afghan peace talk, Framing Theory; Content analysis.</p>
13:15-14:15	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
14:15-16.00	<p><b>1.6 Society, Democracy, and Media in Historical Contexts</b>  <b>Chair: Magdalena Mateja</b></p> <p>Auditorium</p>	<b>Abstract</b>
	<p>Tomasz Gackowski (University of Warsaw);  Marlena Szyber (University of Warsaw);  Marcin Łączyński (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Affectus seu ratio? The Influence of Leader Identity Versus Political Program on Voter Choices: A Case Study of Poland's Polarized Society</i></b></p> <p>Thesis/purpose of the article: This research delves into the escalating trend of personalized politics, a subject under examination since the early 1990s (Aarts, Blais, &amp; Schmitt, 2013; Lobo &amp; Curtice, 2014; Wattenberg, 1991). Despite the extensive history of this investigation, various unresolved queries persist. Of particular interest is the impact of leaders on voter behavior, the extent of this influence, the contextual factors fostering its prevalence, and its repercussions (Adam &amp; Maier, 2016). Concurrently, the burgeoning societal polarization in select EU nations (especially in times of war), potentially linked with increased support for right-wing parties, has drawn considerable attention (Down &amp; Han, 2021). Notably, the state of affairs in Eastern and Central European nations remains inadequately explored. Consequently, this study aims to address the following inquiries: What motivates the political choices of Poles? Does identification with a party's leader exert a more substantial influence on Poles than alignment with the party's political agenda or specific policy stances? Our investigation seeks to answer these questions by scrutinizing respondents' explicit responses and psychophysiological reactions.</p> <p>Methods: The focal point of this research entailed an experiment executed on the iMotions 8.1 biometric research platform. Employing face-tracking (to analyze emotions) and eye-tracking (to gauge attention), we monitored respondents' behaviors as they made paired judgments on a series of political statements, including those attributed to figures like Donald Tusk (Civic Coalition) and Jarosław Kaczyński (Law &amp; Justice). Additionally, data were gathered via Computer-Assisted Interviews, Paper-and-Pen Interviews, and In-Depth Interviews. The research encompassed seventy-two respondents, representing supporters of various political parties across two generational cohorts: ages 23-26 and 50-55.</p> <p>Results and conclusions: Our findings demonstrate statistically significant disparities in the judgments of supporters from the two dominant parties (Civic Coalition and Law &amp; Justice), particularly upon realizing whether the statement originated from their own party's leader or the opposing party's leader (emotional response vs. rational assessment). These distinctions were notably pronounced within the right-wing party (Law &amp; Justice, the ruling party), a group that exhibited differentiation from other voter segments across multiple aspects. Utilizing face-tracking research methods, we confirmed that these variations manifested in both declarative responses and psychophysiological reactions when acknowledging the statement's author (with eye-tracking serving as a pivotal marker of this moment). We postulate that this outcome is a consequence of intense polarization prevailing in political discourse, which amplifies the influence of leaders while relegating political agendas to secondary significance.</p>

Yaron Ariel (The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College);  
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## ***Analyzing media usage patterns during the Israel-Hamas 2023 October war***

### **Introduction**

On October 7, 2023, a massive massacre of (primarily) Israeli civilians by Hamas terrorists, marked the beginning of the “Swords of Iron” war, initiated by Israel in response. The harrowing events of that day, followed by ongoing war-related incidents, have plunged the nation into a state of profound shock and deep mourning. Historically, in previous conflicts and national emergencies, within Israel and globally the media has significantly shaped how citizens perceive and cope with these critical events (Knüpfer & Entman, 2018; White, 2020; Wolfsfeld, 2018). Drawing from an extensive body of literature on media use during times of war (Elishar-Malka et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2020; Kozman & Melki, 2021; Malka et al., 2015; Melki & Kozman, 2021; Schejter & Cohen, 2013) the current study investigates how Israeli civilians utilize different media channels and platforms to fulfill their specific needs, as a function of their perspectives, and personal traits amid this ongoing war.

### **Media Uses and Gratification during Wartime**

Building upon the foundational Uses and Gratifications theory of communication (Katz et al., 1974; Rubin, 2009; Steiner & Xu, 2020), extensive research over the past few decades has explored how individuals rely on media during wartime and national crises. These studies, focusing on civilian experiences under extreme conditions, illuminate the role of media in meeting urgent, situation-specific needs (Elishar-Malka et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2020; Kozman et al., 2018; Malka et al., 2015; Melki & Kozman, 2021; Melki et al., 2022). According to the Uses and Gratifications theory, people use various media channels and platforms to satisfy specific needs. During wartime, these often include an increased demand for timely information and guidance, and tools to process and cope with feelings such as fear and anxiety. Social media and instant messaging have been found essential in maintaining social connections and collective resilience, thus reinforcing the social-integrative role of media (Elishar-Malka et al., 2023; Malka et al., 2015).

Additionally, the theory underscores how media consumption is influenced by the immediacy and intensity of the conflict, individuals' perceptions of risk, political biases, media literacy, and the availability of different media outlets (Kozman et al., 2018; Kozman & Melki, 2021).

### **Psychological distance from the war**

Based on Trope and Liberman's (2010) framework, psychological distance is the subjective perception of events, ideas, or objects as distant from one's immediate self, time, and space. This concept is inherently egocentric, focusing on the individual's perspective, and encompasses various dimensions such as time, space, social distance, and hypotheticality. As objects or concepts become more distant from direct experience, whether in terms of time, space, social relationships, or likelihood, they are perceived at a higher, more abstract level. The theory suggests that increased psychological distance leads to more abstract mental representations of these distant objects or events, influencing our predictions, preferences, and actions (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Implementing this theory to the context of war, we may assess that people's psychological distance from the places, events, and victims involved, will deeply influence their whole war experience, and therefore their patterns of media use.

### **Research hypotheses**

H1: There will be differences in how mainstream and alternative media usages fulfill cognitive, affective, social-integrative, and escapist needs during wartime.

H2: Psychological distance from the war will mediate the relationship between needs and mainstream media usage patterns during wartime

H3: Psychological distance from the war will mediate the relationship between needs and alternative media usage patterns during wartime

**Research variables**

Media types: 'mainstream media' refers to main Israeli t.v., radio, and online news sites, while 'alternative media' refers to leading social networks and instant text messaging apps in Israel.

Cognitive, affective, social-integrative, and escapist needs: Katz et al. (1974) have suggested that individuals' thoughts and feelings influence what they anticipate to receive from the media. This study measured these four needs using a 12-item scale (three items for each need). Adapted from Malka et al. (2015), the items included statements concerning consuming information. We calculated the index twice - one index referring to mainstream media and another for alternative media. For example, "Consuming information from the media: helps me understand what is going on" (cognitive need), "makes me feel upset" (affective need), "strengthen my sense of belonging to the country" (social integration need), "helps me feel more relaxed" (escapist need). The needs index regarding mainstream media was calculated, with higher values indicating greater needs (M= 2.777, SD=0.848,  $\alpha = .911$ ). The needs index regarding alternative media also was calculated, with higher values indicating greater needs (M= 2.607, SD=0.985,  $\alpha = .937$ ).

Psychological Distance from the war: was assessed using a 4-item index adapted from Trope & Liberman (2010). Participants rated statements on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). The items included "I feel that the war-related events are close to me," "I can see myself getting directly hurt from the war", "The war has hurt my soul," and "I can understand what those who got hurt went through". Responses were averaged to create a psychological distance index score ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ), with higher scores indicating greater perceived distance and lower scores suggesting feelings of closeness to the war events. The mean psychological distance was 3.255 (SD = 0.816).

**Method**

Participants

A total of 500 individuals aged 18 and above participated in this study. The sample was sourced from an online panel representative of the Jewish-Israeli population, per the Central Bureau of Statistics data. The maximum standard error was set at 4.5%. Sample size calculations conducted using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009) were based on a medium-sized effect size to achieve 90% power in detecting significant differences.

Procedure

The study employed a between-subjects design. Participants completed a comprehensive, anonymous 100-item survey. This survey encompassed a range of measures, including demographic information, news consumption patterns, smartphone usage patterns, and perspectives on the war itself. Approval for the present study was granted by the institutional ethics committee.

**Results**

The first hypothesis (H1) was evaluated using a paired-sample t-test to explore differences in fulfilling cognitive, affective, social-integrative, and escapist needs by mainstream and alternative media during wartime. The results revealed significant differences for all four needs. Specifically, mainstream media usage was significantly higher in fulfilling cognitive ( $t(499) = 7.072, p < .001$ ), integrative ( $t(499) = 6.313, p < .001$ ), and emotional needs ( $t(499) = 2.217, p < .05$ ), compared to alternative media. Conversely, alternative media usage was more prevalent in fulfilling escapist needs ( $t(499) = -3.926, p < .001$ ).

		<p>To test the second hypothesis (H2) a mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro to determine if the psychological distance from the war mediates the relationship between needs and mainstream media usage patterns. Psychological distance was found to be a mediator between integrative (B=0.02, p&lt;.001) and emotional (B=0.019, p&lt;.001) needs and mainstream media usage. Conversely, psychological distance was not found to mediate the relationship between cognitive (B=0.01, p&gt;.05) and escapist (B=0.01, p&gt;.05) needs on mainstream media usage.</p> <p>The third hypothesis (H3) involved a mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro to determine if the psychological distance from the war mediates the relationship between needs and alternative media usage patterns. It was found to be a mediator between cognitive (B=0.03, p&lt;.001) integrative (B=0.02, p&lt;.001) and emotional (B=0.019, p&lt;.001) needs and alternative media usage. Conversely, psychological distance was not found to mediate the relationship between escapist (B=0.01, p&gt;.05) need on alternative media usage.</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>The study's findings corroborate the hypothesis that mainstream and alternative media fulfill different cognitive, affective, social-integrative, and escapist needs during wartime, in line with the uses and gratifications theory. Findings suggest that mainstream media are still highly meaningful for civilians during war, more than might be expected, given the significant hold social media has on our lives. These findings resonate with other current studies on media consumption patterns during war (Elishar-Malka et al.,2023; Kozman &amp; Melki, 2021; Melki &amp; Kozman, 2021; Melki et al., 2022). Preferring alternative over mainstream media for escapist needs only might be an indication of users' perception of and trust in different media under extreme circumstances.</p> <p>Psychological distance from the war emerged as a pivotal mediating factor between users' needs and usage patterns. Regarding both kinds of media, findings indicate that when social-integrative and emotional needs are higher, the psychological distance is smaller, and consumption increases. On the other hand, escapist needs' influence on consumption patterns are not mediated by this variable at all. The only difference between the two kind of media regards cognitive needs. Whereas cognitive needs' influence on mainstream media consumption is not mediated by psychological distance from the war, it was found to be mediated in the case of alternative media usage. Future studies should elaborate on the ways in which this psychological mechanism shapes our preferences during extreme situations.</p>
	<p>Monika Koźdoń-Dębecka (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>The Sound and Image of War. A Television Portrait of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the Audio, Image and Verbal Layers on Two Leading Polish News Channels in 2022-2023.</i></b></p> <p>The war conflict that broke out on a full scale on February 24, 2022 in Ukraine (Troianovski &amp; MacFarquhar, 2022) influenced the way of conducting television narration on this topic in the neighboring country to the war zone - Poland. Content analysis of media messages is a type of research that media experts can precisely target in searching for message elements potentially subject to such modification. The presented study was to analyze the content of television broadcasts of two Polish news channels regarding the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in three dimensions: sound, verbal and image. In the case of the sound layer, elements of background music and the so-called "audio effects" (journalistic term), i.e. sounds implemented into TV news pieces coming from the place of the event described by the reporter, e.g. the sound of a rocket explosion, an ambulance signal, etc. In the case of the verbal layer, it was examined what emotionally charged expressions were used to describe the participants of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in television news. In the image layer, it was decided to focus analytical activities on video material originating from the social media of the participants of the conflict and implemented in television broadcasts. Additionally, the author also searched for genre forms different from the classic TV news and devoted to the</p>

Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the news services of the two surveyed news television channels (TVP Info, TVN24). Focusing on the three above-mentioned layers of television news allowed the author to identify specific elements of the tv message influencing the emotions of the recipients, i.e. those closer to the propaganda nature, rather than purely informational. The awareness that controlling and modifying the information stream is one of the most important tools in conducting warfare has accompanied media researchers for decades. The concept of war propaganda has been defined many times in this context (Aro, 2016; Jenks, 2006; Short, 2021). In the past, the relationships between the media and state structures, as well as the decisions of the media themselves, regarding information policy during armed conflicts were repeatedly analyzed: Kolko (1968) analyzed the information policy pursued by the governments of many countries during World War II, in particular he examined the activity in this regard United States. Kamalipour and Snow (2004) presented a selection of analysis by many authors on the role of the media during armed conflicts around the world in the 20th century. These authors analyzed the multitude of different governments' strategies for controlling information and manipulating media content. Taylor (1992) focused on the Persian Gulf War and analyzed the role of the media and propaganda in shaping public opinion about the conflict, examining how governments controlled information, used propaganda, and manipulated media coverage to achieve their political goals. Schechter (2003) focused on the Iraq War and examined how the media reported information during the conflict. The author cited arguments for governments to control information, and also discussed media manipulation and the role of journalists during armed conflicts. In their collective work, Allan and Zelizer (2004) presented analyses of the role of the media in armed conflicts and terrorist attacks not only from the Western perspective, but also, for example, the African and Balkan perspective. Szurmiński (2008), in turn, examined the content of the American, European and Polish press describing the conflict in Kosovo, looking for differences in these reports resulting from the different perspectives of these media entities.

The presented analysis will show the level of saturation of news materials with elements identified as those of an emotional/propaganda nature, rather than information (e.g. background music in the news pieces, emotional terms evaluating the participants of the conflict in the verbal layer of the news, etc.), and thus show differences in television coverage of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict in two Polish news channels. The first station (TVP Info) belongs to a public broadcaster controlled at that time by the Polish government, which actively supported the Ukrainian state in its fight against the Russian Federation, the second channel (TVN24) belongs to the American commercial television broadcaster Warner Bros. Discovery.

The presented research has a qualitative and quantitative dimension. The research was conducted using the content analysis technique with elements of multimodal analysis of audiovisual texts, characterized and described, among others, by: Stöckl (2016), Forceville (2006) and Mac (2022). The last method helps to comprehensively analyze the components of the television message, but does not allow to determine the sources of motivation of journalists creating tv news pieces.

The study selected evening editions of television news services (broadcasts at 11 p.m. summarizing the day) of two leading Polish tv news channels: TVP Info and TVN24 during 14 days marked by events that focused the media's attention. These were among others: President Zelensky's online recording from the second day of the war (February 25, 2022), the occupation of the city of Kherson by Russian troops (March, 2022), the bombing of Mariupol (March 16, 2022), the massacre in Bucha (March 29, 2022), first anniversary of the Russian-Ukrainian War (February 24, 2023), drone attacks on Moscow (August 7, 2023). A total of 43 television news pieces were included in the research material. On the day of the first anniversary of the outbreak of the conflict (February 24, 2023), both television channels broadcast a total of 17 news devoted to the Russian-Ukrainian



war in evening services. The remaining 26 news pieces came from the additional 13 days of the conflict selected for analysis (one tv news piece from each channel).

In order to systematize the research process and create the correct categorization key, research questions were formulated that can be divided into two groups: the first one concerns variants of the construction of tv information materials (questions Q1-Q4), the second one concerns different from the informational, column-based genre form appearing in the examined television news services (Q5). The research questions were as follows:

Q1. Whether and how sound elements were used in tv news pieces/materials: background music and the so-called " audio effects"?

Q2. What verbal expressions did television reporters use to describe the warring participants of the conflict: Ukraine and Russia and their leaders?

Q3. How did reporters shape the visual layer of war news? Did they use special effects, e.g. graphic techniques that allowed them to anonymize the images of people appearing on the screen, including deceased people?

Q4. Did reporters use materials from social media (video recordings, photos, etc.) made by both sides of the conflict in television broadcasts and how?

Q5. Have there been column genres different from classic tv news pieces on news services?

In the analytical process, a research hypothesis was formulated which was as follows: H: In the television broadcasts of two Polish news channels (TVP Info, TVN24) devoted to Russian- Ukrainian conflict, there appeared elements that could be classified as propaganda activities.

The tool, i.e. the categorization key, in this case having five main categories corresponding to the research questions, allowed for quantitative and qualitative analysis of selected research material obtained thanks to the Laboratorium Badań Medioznawczych WDIB UW.

Analysis results of approximately 40 percent research material (17 news pieces aired on the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war by both stations in evening news services) showed that:

- both "effects" and background music were identified in the tv information pieces of both channels (Q1),
- both TVP Info and TVN24 reporters used emotionally charged phrases in relation to the Russian participants in the conflict: ("bandit attack of Putin's soldiers" - TVP INFO), (about Vladimir Putin: "the speech of this criminal" - TVP INFO), ("the hell of the Russian invasion is still going on" - TVN24) (Q2)
- reporters from both channels used techniques to anonymize the image of war victims, although in the case of TVN24 these actions were not consistent (Q3)
- reporters used video content and photos from social media in TV news, both from Ukrainian and Russian sources (Q4)
- the news services of both channels contained genres other than the classic news pieces (columns using image, sound and music as the main elements constituting the tv message) (Q5).

Full data relating to the entire research material will show in detail both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of individual identified elements of the television message that strengthen its emotionality and therefore its propaganda overtones. Such a summary will be available after analyzing the rest of research material.

A study designed in this way cannot answer the question about the state's inspiration in television broadcasts, both in the case of a public and commercial broadcaster. To check whether the use of propaganda elements by journalists was inspired directly by politicians, it would be necessary to conduct surveys among television reporters, especially in public television on

		<p>which the ruling party in Poland had direct organizational and financial influence in the years 2015-2023. Whereas the presented shape of the study will allow the author to demonstrate whether there are differences in television coverage of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict due to the status of the television broadcaster (public or commercial).</p>
	<p>Jyotirmay Das (Mahindra University Hyderabad)</p>	<p><b><i>War and the 'Promised Land': Bnei Menashe's Road to Salvation</i></b></p> <p>The Israel-Hamas war has jostled everyone, especially the Jewish diaspora. Most stand in solidarity with the state of Israel. Some from the Jewish diaspora community immigrated to Israel to fight the Hamas alongside the Israeli army. The Bnei Menashe is one such group among whom there has been a surge in immigration ever since the war broke out in October 2023. Bnei Menashe is a Jewish community from the Indian states of Manipur and Mizoram who started settling down in the disputed West Bank area of Israel in the 1980s. The ones present there have joined the army in all earnest, and the ones left behind in India are affirmatively responding to Israel's 'call of duty'. They are heading toward Israel in support of their 'homeland'. The war, in a way, has facilitated 'Aliyah' for the Jews, the immigration to the 'promised land'.</p> <p>The Israel-Palestine conflict and the 'returning' of the Indian Jews to Israel has once again brought forth the discussion around the notion of homeland-nation-nationalism and its symbiotic relationship with war, as claimed by Benedict Anderson in his seminal Imagined Communities. Israel was created as a nation for the Jews after the Second World War and the Bnei Menashe consider this faraway geography, which is now Israel, their 'homeland'. India ceases to be their home anymore.</p> <p>Back home in India, the Bnei Menashe are embroiled in another war. The Indian state of Manipur is currently reeling under an ethnic clash between the dominant Meitei and minority Kuki-Chin-Mizo communities that started in May 2023. Many from the latter group belong to the Bnei Menashe. More than 180 people have lost their lives in the clash between the two communities. Houses, offices, commercial establishments, Temples, Churches, and Synagogues have been destroyed. People from affected villages are housed in relief camps or fled to nearby states, including Mizoram.</p> <p>Media coverage in India has mainly been lackadaisical on both fronts. 'Fringe groups' from the hinterlands, such as Meitei, Kuki, Mizo, or Bnei Menashe remain largely invisible in the Indian public discourse and the media plays a significant role in facilitating the same. Their existence and operations do not garner much attention in the mainstream media. And if they do so, it comes with the baggage of misinformation and disinformation. Media trends have shown a high amount of rumors and fake news being shared by Indian nationals in connection to the Israel-Hamas war and Manipur conflict, either unknowingly or for vested interests.</p> <p>A section of the Indian media, more so the local media in the northeastern states of Manipur and Mizoram, has shown some interest in the Bnei Menashe angle. The media featured a few stories on the Jewish 'lost tribe' narrative and Bnei Menashe's recent reverse exodus. These news pieces have been unable to hog the media limelight; nevertheless, they have found some print and screen space in the Indian media. The media has attempted to historicize the Indian Jewish communities and report on the war casualties faced by the Indian reservists in Israel. On the Manipur conflict, the Indian media has done far less than expected. It has been accused of initially being ignorant and later as biased. The Editor's Guild of India New Delhi sent three journalists on a four-day fact-finding mission to Manipur in August 2023. Their report, published in September 2023, has attracted police complaints from both state government and civil society for allegedly being half-hearted and biased.</p> <p>The Times of Israel has also reported on the involvement of the Bnei Menashe's in both the Israel and Manipur conflict. Though it wrote about the torching of Synagogues in Manipur, it has been careful enough to mention that the violence is not explicitly directed towards the Bnei Menashe but the other larger communities.</p>

		<p>The majority of netizens on social media in India are occupied with the Israel war and busy taking either side. They are divided on the lines of pro-Israel and pro-Palestine sentiments. Interestingly enough, the greatest number of reactions on social media about the Israel war were produced and distributed by accounts from India, the dominating narrative being pro-Israel. According to Narrative Research Lab New Delhi, most of the narratives on X (formerly Twitter) favor and support Israel over Palestine, in the ratio of 5:1. Historically, India has had a pro-Palestine approach, which is fast changing under the current right-wing political disposition in the country. India stands for the Palestinian cause, and at the same time, it categorically condemns terrorism in all its forms. But the same understanding seems to be missing from the social media narratives. The paper will examine the nature of Indian media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict in general and Bnei Menashe's involvement in the war in particular: the pitfalls, biases at work, misinformation, and formation of public opinion. It will analyze the role of war and media in popularizing the myths surrounding the concept of 'homeland'. It will also explore the historical and present-day Indo-Israeli diplomacy to understand the social media trends concerning the Israel-Hamas war. The research will give a perspective on how wars in contemporary times are fought at different frontiers, including the media, and how mythology and public opinion play a part in facilitating modern-day wars.</p>
14:15-16.00	<p><b>1.7 Nothing New Under the Sun? Spreading False Information in New Media</b>  <b>Chairs: Agnieszka Stępińska, Kinga Adamczewska</b></p> <p>Room 1.120</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Sara Monaci (Politecnico di Torino); Simone Persico (Politecnico di Torino)</p>	<p><b><i>Disinformation in times of war. The role of fringe platforms in social media ecosystem</i></b></p> <p>The invasion of Ukraine has initiated a far-reaching conflict that marks a major turning point in the state of disinformation. The new element is the emergence of a media ecosystem (Zuckerman, Ib.: 1497) in which the flows of disinformation are fed by the complex relationship between the fringe environments such as Telegram, Rumble, 4Chan etc., and the mainstream platforms such as Facebook and X. Drawing from the McLuhanian idea of 'media ecology' later elaborated by Neil Postman (1985), Zuckerman describes a media ecosystem that encompasses digital information flows involving platforms such as Facebook, information gatekeepers such as Google, but also the multiple digital channels of the mainstream media, as well as the individual users as consumers and producers of information and disinformation. Zuckerman also emphasises the potential of digital methods in the content analysis of the new media ecosystem: the effects of disinformation can in fact be studied thanks to a computational approach, which is able to identify information flows across different media and platforms in the context of an increasingly interconnected ecosystem (Ib.: 1504 -1509).</p> <p>Drawing from Zuckerman's model, the paper introduces the dimension of fringe platforms as particularly significant in the current landscape of disinformation; their role emerges in relation to two central aspects. The first concerns the libertarian nature of fringe platforms that enables greater levels of anonymity and free expression to organisations and individuals, thus also giving voice to hyper-partisan positions and the spread of fake news and conspiracy theories. In line with previous studies, the essay considers disinformation - fake news, conspiracy theories, hoaxes - as conceptually separate from hyper-partisan content, which identifies contents that are radically aligned but not necessarily false (Rogers, 2021; Mourão and Robertson,</p>

2019). This distinction, although problematic, permits to distinguish content that is objectively verified as false, and thus used to manipulate public opinion, from politically partisan content intended to reinforce, for example, a view of the war based on the 'clash' between the United States and Russia. The second aspect concerns the regulation of content moderation, which involves platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, YouTube, etc., but ignores the fringe platforms (Digital Service Act, 2022). In fact, the war in Ukraine led the European Union to adopt special measures to contain Russian propaganda and disinformation on mainstream social media by censoring the main Russian media - RT (Russian TV) and Sputnik - in most European and Western countries (Eur-Lex 2022). Other containment measures targeted at the social profiles of private citizens who knowingly or unknowingly contribute to the spread of fake news, were undertaken independently by the mainstream platforms (Susi, Benedek, Fischer-Lessiak, Kettemann, Schippers and Viljanen, 2022). As an extreme solution, among the moderation actions aimed at individuals, there is de-platforming: the removal of the profiles of the most problematic users who, banned from Facebook or X, often migrate to Telegram, Parler etc. in search of more libertarian and less monitored contexts (Rogers, 2020).

The research therefore aims to analyse how, also considering the changed regulatory framework, it is possible to trace a growing interaction between information flows involving mainstream platforms and fringe networks, and a progressive 'sinking' of hyper-partisan positions towards marginal environments.

In particular, the essay addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What kind of information flows characterise the shift from mainstream to fringe platforms of the debate on the war in Ukraine?

RQ2: How can we describe the role of users directing information flows to marginal platforms?

### **Methodology**

In view of the highlighted dimensions, the research focused on the public debate in Italian and in English about the war in Ukraine for analysing the relationship between the contents in mainstream platforms such as Facebook and X, and the fringe environments Rumble and Telegram. The analysis considered the bridges contained in Facebook and X contents that direct the user towards the video-sharing platform Rumble and the messaging application Telegram, with the aim of identifying the typology of the connected flows and the possible presence of disinformation or hyper-partisan content.

In light of the evolution of social media into a complex media ecosystem, the term bridge is used to describe the connection between information flows from different platforms, each characterised by different affordances. Facebook and X users often include hyperlinks within their posts to avoid tweet size limitations and to enrich content by generating a hypertext dynamic (Gao, Zhang, Li and Hou, 2012). In social media, hyperlinks open up new avenues for the circulation of information, generate virality and present a relational component (Sjøvaag, Stavelin, Karlsson and Kammer, 2019). Through them, in fact, a user attempts to establish a connection with another actor and communicates this affiliation to the general public (Shumate & Contractor, 2014). The link can also involve an institutional actor: an online newspaper or another information source; including a link in a social media message implies a choice: the use of this resource is thus an intentional act (Ryfe Mensing and Kelley, 2016). Hyperlinks can thus be considered bridges to the extent that they are tactically used by subjects to direct attention to fringe environments that may be a source of misinformation or hyper-partisan content.

The research focused primarily on the Italian debate and then identified any similarities with content in English with the aim of analysing possible links to disinformation or hyper-partisan content generated elsewhere. The analysis of social content was carried out through digital methods (Rogers, 2019) and examined a period of approximately 12 months starting from the

		<p>invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army: from 15th February 2022 to 31st January 2023; the total volume of data analysed is shown in Figure 1.</p> <p>In order to intercept communication flows towards the fringe platforms, we performed a further selection in order to identify bridges. This was accomplished by selecting from the dataset the hyperlinks to the platforms under consideration, i.e. the direct connections to Rumble (rumble.com) and Telegram (t.me). Figure 2 shows the original content identified after the bridge selection.</p> <p><b>Preliminary findings</b></p> <p>In response to RQ1, the central role of Telegram emerges in the debate aligned to anti-NATO and anti-US positions, at least in the Italian context. In relation to the type of content, multiple and different flows emerge: in the Italian debate on Facebook and X, bridges are used towards Telegram mainly to direct followers towards hyper-partisan content. This tactic is observed in particular for links to news channels such as L'Antidiplomatico, Spreaditlab, where the prevalence of ideologically polarised channels on anti-NATO and anti-US arguments, shows opinions decidedly far from the positions of the Italian government and the European Union on the war in Ukraine (Figure 3). However, it is the bridges to channels re-posting Russian sources banned from the main platforms, that reveal the most evident hyper-partisan content in the Italian debate: here, some individual users actively mediate and spread 'unauthorised' sources banned elsewhere.</p> <p>On the other hand, disinformation distinguishes the content on Rumble, a niche platform in Italy, but more popular in the English debate, as can be seen from the data in Figure 2.</p> <p>The discussions analysed in the Telegram and Rumble channels thus reveal a significant set of hyper-partisan or decidedly disinformation arguments that characterise the fringe dimension of the social media ecosystem. Such a dimension, although eclipsed by the presence of mainstream platforms, nevertheless plays a significant role. In Italy, in fact, Telegram is evolving from a marginal environment to a central platform for information: at the time of writing, Telegram counts more than 17 million active users and it's well ahead of X with 11.5 million users (Starri, 2023).</p> <p>The shift of hyper partisan positions from mainstream platforms to the fringe ones could be interpreted as a reaction to the censorship operated by Facebook and X in line with European regulations that came into force after the invasion of Ukraine. It is, however, difficult to empirically verify the causal link between the censorship of official Russian channels, the de-platforming of specific profiles by mainstream platforms and the growth of the fringe environments as a safe haven for the dissemination of disinformation: observation can only be limited, in the absence of systematic data on which and how many profiles have been banned from Facebook and X, to specific cases and ex-post analyses (Rogers, 2020). What emerges from our empirical investigation, however, in response to RQ2, is the central role of certain users who were banned from the main platforms and who act as Political Social Media Influencers (Bause, 2021). Those users, removed from both Facebook and Twitter, act as mediators of misinformation and hyper-partisan content, and act as catalysts for broader networks of followers aligned to the same positions. Those users eventually keep the connections between the main platforms and the fringe ones alive, as these connections are the only ones that allow them to stay visible in an increasingly regulated ecosystem.</p>
	<p>Jakub Jakubowski (Adam Mickiewicz University); Vladyslav Zinichenko (Adam Mickiewicz University)</p>	<p><b><i>From Classic to TikTok Propaganda. Russian Aggression in Ukraine and New Media Perspective</i></b></p> <p>The ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine has become a highly relevant example of war in the age of social media, demonstrating how the tools and mechanisms of propaganda have transformed alongside recent developments in media.</p>

Propaganda itself has been defined in many different ways, including dimensions like mistreatment of truth, communication activities against human beings or systematic persuasion. But the crucial element of all definitions and the basis of various theories is to direct public sympathies and attitudes.

We see that the dominant scientific narrative are research focused on different political actors and online tools that support propaganda. There are few studies on the impact of the changing form of media messages on the mechanisms of propaganda. Hence our proposal to complement this knowledge with the theoretical concept of propaganda in which TikTok plays the dominant role as a source of knowledge for young people.

There were few reasons for choosing TikTok as the research object. First, this social media application is the leader in the 18-24 age group in Ukraine and Russia. Another reason is the amount of user-generated content. For instance, videos with the hashtag #Ukraine received 50.3B views, and with the hashtag #Russia – 69,7B views as of July 14, 2022. There are special TikTok houses that gather unique influencers to create new videos, increase their popularity, and work with advertisers. Volodymyr Zelenskyy listed TikTokers among the groups that could resist the war, in an appeal to Russians a day before the start of military invasion. After all, TikTok is one of the most developing and least researched social media platforms not only in social science but also in medical, economic, information and many other fields.

There is no doubt that one of the first and most influential concepts of propaganda was Lasswell’s theory. Other established theories based on the experiences of 20th century totalitarian regimes are theories of propaganda by Chakhotin or other scientific concepts considering media messages as “magic bullets”. According to Chakhotin, Nazi propaganda worked on the same principle as inducing conditioned reflexes in Pavlov’s experiments. The senders, using slogans, continuously and systematically stimulate the internal motives of behavior (drives, instincts) of the recipients on the basis of the stimulus-response action. This model assumes the passivity and irrational behavior of the individual and their high susceptibility to propaganda content. The technique of influence consists in associating (through persistent repetition) specific ideological contents with internal human drives. Simultaneously, magic bullet theory assumes that the media message is like a bullet that, if it hits a specific audience, always has the intended effect in the form of a specific reaction identical for all recipients. Based on more advanced research, today we know exactly that such thinking is too simplistic. On the other hand, some elements of magic bullet theory are worth reinterpreting, taking into account the changing features of media. If posts on TikTok take the form of short, stimulus videos, looped and repeated many times, it seems that this way of thinking about propaganda in the age of social media may prove useful again.

We used a multi-stage triangulation including elements of netnography, qualitative content analysis and case study method. Procedure designed in this way was supplemented with research questions: RQ1: What opportunities for spreading propaganda does the TikTok platform have? RQ2: How do Ukrainians and Russians present and propagate propagandist content on TikTok? RQ3. How may the new aspects of media content influence the theory of propaganda? The database consists of 789 tiktoks and 124 screenshots. The data collection covered the period from February 24 to July 30, 2022. As a result, we identified changes in the practice of creating propaganda: in social media architecture (1), propaganda techniques (2) and content producers (3).

The conclusions from the analysis confront the assumptions of the most important theories on propaganda, including war propaganda (e.g. Lasswell, Chakhotin). Those of them which were based on the era of mass media did not include the complexity of so-called new media. According to our findings, the sorting algorithms that individualize the media diet of users increase the opportunities for spreading propaganda via TikTok (RQ1.). The new architecture of social media makes

		<p>arguments and emotions better-adapted to the needs of the user. Persuasive techniques are customized, for example, to the user's tolerance for the brutality presented in the content. The algorithm tests and practices the best methods of influence until it reaches the optimal result for the individual recipient. We argue that the quoted "magic bullet" theory contained a logical mistake - a bullet cannot be aimed equally at millions of spectators in mass communication. Simultaneously, massive weapons are too general for arguments against each individual to be effective. The AI on which the content distribution is based makes each bullet different and adapted to the user, and thus - more effective. This is a fundamental change in the propaganda distribution process. The effectiveness of this mechanism is also influenced by the large variety of content present on TikTok (RQ2.).</p> <p>Propagandist content has gained a more social character thanks to the new types of media. In democratic regimes, the role of the state and media institutions in this respect has definitely weakened. Users have gained much greater opportunities to produce content, which can be associated with their credibility (users trust primarily their online friends). Due to the change in the structure of the electronic services market since the 1980s, Internet media in the globalized world are less related to state institutions, less state-based, and thus - less dependent on the government. TikTok propaganda is therefore more user-based. This is a major paradigm shift from earlier propaganda theories (RQ3.). It also allows for a better understanding of its mechanisms, distinguishing between democratic (Ukraine) and authoritarian (Russia) countries.</p> <p>In conclusion, changes in the media require a revision of theoretical assumptions, which in the future will allow the creation of a new theory of propaganda.</p>
	<p>Arul Chib (Erasmus University of Rotterdam); Maria T. Lozano (Institute of Social Studies); Vera Safronova (Institute of Housing Studies); Alkaviia Sultangazieva; Nino Tartarashvili (Erasmus University of Rotterdam)</p>	<p><b><i>The Impact of Online (mis-)Information about Conflict on Diaspora Well-being</i></b></p> <p>The on-going Russo-Ukrainian conflict has resulted in the displacement of millions, with many finding refuge in the Netherlands. Here they form part of a complex diaspora from the former Soviet states, including immigrants from Russia. The complexity of diasporic experiences is influenced by digital news, which can be a source of relief and attachment, but conversely a source of stress and exclusion. This study investigates the wellbeing of migrants from regions engaged in conflict, focusing on and how engaging with information and misinformation, henceforth (mis-)information, affects them.</p> <p>There is longstanding literature on the use of digital devices for accessing, participating in discussions about, and sharing news within personal networks (Thompson, 2009), allowing immigrants to stay in touch with people and events back home. However, the role of digital media in volatile conflict situations has recently been revitalized in research, particularly the role of misinformation and its social impacts. Scholars identify how contemporary conflicts are not just confined to war zones but have parallels in 'Information Wars' (Golovchenko, et al., 2018; Khaldarova &amp; Pantti, 2016; Szostek, 2018). Information wars deal with how governments, societies, civilians, and the media become entangled with showing their versions of the truth and how this process shapes moral support, external financing, and as military strategies to beat the enemy (Kaempf, 2013; Zeitzoff, 2018). There is also concern that fake news propagated on social media platforms can be used to disseminate false claims against refugee communities (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, &amp; Wodak, 2018).</p> <p>In the context of the Ukraine War there is a vast corpus of literature that deals with misinformation, usually connected to the Kremlin's state sponsored misinformation machine (Aro, 2016; Paul &amp; Matthews RAND, 2008; Szostek, 2018b). However, recent research has shown how civilians, from both Russian and Ukrainian diasporas, interact, assimilate, negotiate, and potentially spread misinformation due to differing reasons (Hauter, 2023). Research has shown how groups are likely to believe a digital source depending on their existing ideological beliefs (Bakshy et al., 2015). For example, a recent study</p>

(Mazepus et al., 2023) found that Ukrainians are more likely to endorse false news that portrayed Russia in a negative light than false news targeting the European Union.

Misinformation's stickiness is not just through the work of state narratives curated by bots, algorithms, and filter bubbles but research has also shown an important role of individual searches, social network trust, and individual choice in fact checking or not (Mejias & Vokuev, 2017). Being exposed to untrustworthy information online can create conflicts and in the case of refugees limit their safety. The lack of trustworthy channels can lead them to not trust governments and seek more informal and illegal accesses to welfare (Carlson et al., 2018). Thus, for members of diasporas abroad from their countries of origin, misinformation has the potential to influence participation in the conflict. The rising trend of 'citizen journalism falls under this category, but there is also the rise of those members of society not close to the conflict but active on the digital sphere.

Thus, in the literature regarding the Ukrainian War there is a growing pattern regarding how the use of social media and digital narratives by civilians has become more entrenched in the participation of receiving, creating, spreading, and refuting both valid information and misinformation. We question how those affected engage in coping strategies such as filtering or disengagement in response to (mis-)information received regarding conflicts back at home. To do so, we conducted 20 in-depth interviews in the Netherlands with the immigrant diaspora related to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. We employed a comparative approach using qualitative interviewing methods to with respondents of Russian, Ukrainian, and other (e.g., Georgian) origin. Respondents were asked about the trust in various forms of information and digital news sources.

Preliminary findings from the interviews found several noteworthy dynamics. The first one relates to the relation between ideology and trust in the source of digital news (Bakshy et al., 2015). Respondents revealed that their personal resonance with perceived ideology of the news source was a key determinant of trust and continued engagement. Specifically, one respondent stated lack of trust in digital media sources such as Russia Today or Ria Novosti due to not focusing on objective news sharing but rather spreading the pro-government view of the ongoing war. It is noteworthy that the participant was aware that their preferred source of information, independent news channels such as Meduza and Mediazona also follow a certain ideology. In this case, trust is a function of alignment of their personal belief system with the ideology of these news outlets.

Relatedly, in relation to trust in sources, respondents revealed an unconscious bias to prefer certain sources considered neutral and credible such as BBC, NYT, or the Washington post. While stating explicitly they do not fact-check, probing questions revealed that they employ numerous fact-checking methods, These methods include aligning information from multiple sources, following the news item over time to notice discrepancies, checking imagery and statistics from the sources. Our preliminary findings contradict earlier research (Hauter, 2023) which discusses how Russian and Ukrainian diasporas actively engage with digital information about the conflict, themselves sharing the news. Our participants were very engaged at the beginning of the conflict, regularly checking their digital platforms and channels to follow live updates. Beyond reading the comments related to posts on social media, some would engage in a potentially controversial discussion with personal networks about ongoing events. However, with time, participants started to disengage with digital sources, noting that their deep engagement was a source of personal stress. Preliminary analysis suggest that this could be either due to increasing negative portrayals of national identity or because of processing conflicting information regarding their belief systems.

A salient outcome of the information war related to the ongoing conflict was fear for their safety due to online surveillance. The sharing of information during conflict among Russian-speaking respondents was minimal due to their persistent fear that revelation of their opinions could place their family or friends back home in danger. Interviewees revealed that they



		<p>sometimes shared news about the war with their immediate family members but almost never with their broader social network, a behavior that changed during the course of the conflict. They feared that their opposing viewpoints of not supporting the war would reflect on the ideology of their family at home. These beliefs translated into acts of digital non-use, with respondents exercising restraint in participating in digital news forums and platforms, often actively disengaging, disconnecting, distancing, and even departing (Chib, Ang, Ibasco, &amp; Nguyen, 2021). We argue that both the resultant reduced quantity, as well as quality, of the migrants diaspora digital contact with their home networks has negatively impacted their well-being.</p> <p>This research concludes that counter to recorded literature on diaspora engagement with the news at home, in the case of Russian-speaking immigrant communities in the Netherlands, their social networks are shrinking as they seek to not showcase their political support for the ideology that is considered extremist at home. We reflect on whethese acts of non-use from surveillance concerns constitute agentic acts of resilience, and whether these contribute to the decreased salience of the conflict.</p>
	<p>Maria Lipińska (ALK); Dariusz Jemielniak (Kozminski Univeristy)</p>	<p><b><i>The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Anti-Ukrainian Narratives on Polish Twitter</i></b></p> <p>The article focuses on anti-Ukrainian narratives spread on Twitter. We performed a Thick Big Data analysis of words and hashtags connected with anti-Ukrainian narratives. We collected 16,700 tweets from 25 January 2023 to 22 February 2023, focusing on the most popular and commented ones. We conducted multi-modal narrative and rhetorical analyses to distinguish the typology of narrations, which was later settled in the framework of Paul Chilton’s model. This article sheds light on how vital narration in disinformation campaigns and media warfare on social media is.</p> <p>Most of the tweets contained narration highlighting the alleged appropriation of Polish culture through the display of Ukrainian nationality. Such narration strongly influences a sense of insecurity and alienation in one’s own country. We discovered that Ukrainian-related posts have negative sentiment, and appear to be frequently spreading disinformation.</p> <p>Keywords: narration, Twitter, disinformation, war, Ukraine.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Coinciding with the advent of innovative information technologies is the concurrent emergence of sophisticated disinformation strategies (Chamberlain, 2010). Disinformation becomes an important tool in the information warfare arsenal (Golovchenko et al., 2018; Steinfeld, 2022). Sowing fear and disparagement narratives is included in military training and exercises (Ventsel et al., 2021) and winning in persuading the Western audience is key in many of the international military conflicts (Asmolov, 2021; Hauter, 2023), including the war on Ukraine (Makhortykh &amp; Bastian, 2022). Overall, exposing the information warfare strategies requires detailed analyses, based on narrative ontologies (Wagnsson &amp; Barzanje, 2021).</p> <p>The increasing pervasiveness of disinformation across social media platforms has evolved into a potent instrument for public opinion manipulation, particularly discernible in election cycles and broader political contexts. Noteworthy instances include the propagation of Russian propaganda during the 2016 U.S. elections (Badawy et al., 2019) and orchestrated narratives around the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny (Alieva et al., 2022). By 2023, disinformation regarding the war in Ukraine has surfaced as the preeminent subject of fraudulent news, as per EDMO reports (EDMO, 2023).</p> <p>Following the Russian incursion into Ukraine, many data analyses emerged, examining the magnitude and sentiments of tweets pertinent to the conflict (Shevtsov et al., 2022). Additionally, studies scrutinizing pro-Russian narratives within the context of Crimea’s annexation were published (Golovchenko, 2020). However, there is a deficit of scholarly work focusing on the evolution of social media content regarding Polish-Ukrainian relations post-2022. According to a report compiled by</p>

the Polish fact-checking organization and the Institute of Media Monitoring (Demagog, 2023), in November 2022, approximately 73.5 thousand Polish-language social media posts and comments negatively referenced Ukraine and Ukrainians. The volume of such posts witnessed an 88% surge compared to the preceding month, with Twitter identified as the platform hosting a staggering 92% of all anti-Ukrainian posts.

Anti-Ukrainian narratives in Poland are not a novel development within the sociopolitical landscape, primarily attributed to enduring historical disputes (Copsey, 2008; Motyka, 2018). Polish-Ukrainian relations have been invariably entwined with contentious historical events, such as Operation Vistula, the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia, and World War II.

Pre-2022, Polish interaction with Ukrainians was primarily limited to economic migrants seeking employment opportunities (Konieczna, 2019). Recent data from CBOS reveal an upsurge in Polish empathy toward Ukrainians over the years (CBOS, n.d.). However, the statistics for January 2023 depict a concerning 8% shift in public sentiment regarding the treatment of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. In January 2023, 10% of survey respondents perceived the Polish attitude towards Ukrainian refugees as negative (a stark rise from 2% in April 2022), and a further 1% classified the sentiment as strongly negative (an increase from 0%).

Olchowski (2019) posits that social media platforms serve as conduits for the spread of pro-Russian narratives and misinformation about strained Poland-Ukraine relations. He identifies bots and trolls as the primary facilitators of such actions, designed to incite instability and manipulate public opinion.

Our research aims to shed light on the anti-Ukrainian narrative proliferating on Twitter post the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This exploration fills a critical research void, as social media has become a crucial information source regarding the Ukrainian conflict. We employed qualitative research methodologies to discern a typology of narratives, identifying three predominant anti-Ukrainian narratives within our study's scope. Moreover, we investigated disinformation trends within the specified content.

### **Methods**

We opted for a mixed method of Thick Big Data (Jemielniak, 2020), using a quantitative analysis of anti-Ukrainian tweets as a pilot for a narrative study of their content. Mixing computational and ethnographic approaches is increasingly popular (Bornakke & Due, 2018; Charles & Gherman, 2019), as possibly being the best of both worlds (Ducheneaut et al., 2010; Ophir et al., 2020), and allowing a more targeted qualitative focus to meaningfully selected parts of larger quantitative datasets (Ganczewski & Jemielniak, 2022; Górska et al., 2022).

To probe the proliferation of anti-Ukrainian narratives on Twitter in Poland, we employed an array of strategies, including hashtags such as #StopUkrainizacjiPolski (#Stop the Ukrainianization of Poland), #ToNieNaszaWojna (#It isn't our war), #NiedlaWojny (#No for war), and keyword searches including "Ukry" (Ukrainians), "Ukraińcy" (Ukrainians), "ukraińscy faszyci" (Ukrainian fascists), "Wołyń" (Volhynia), "bandera" (Bandera), "banderowcy" (banderists), "Wielka Polska" (Great Poland), "UPA" (The Ukrainian Insurgent Army), "Ukropolin" (Ukrapolish) and "fuck Ukraine." We also utilized the snowball method to identify interconnected accounts, broadening our analytical scope.

For the subsequent analysis of the extracted tweets, for more nuanced qualitative research (Philipp, 2014), we calculated and selected the most engaging Tweets. The dataset comprised 16,700 tweets collected from January 25 to February 22, 2023. From this corpus, we meticulously selected the 50 most popular and extensively commented tweets for our in-depth multimodal narrative and rhetorical analysis to identify salient features of disinformation and hate speech.

We established a coding key derived from observations on the most widely engaged tweets to effectively codify the data. This key was bifurcated into five distinct sections: Metadata, Contents, Basic Message, Narrative, Rhetorical Analysis, and Visual Analysis. Each section encapsulated specific interrogatives and categories tailored for a thorough narrative and rhetorical examination (see the supplement for coding details).

We followed with a narrative analysis of the content of the selected tweets. Narratives are vehicles of meaning we organize our understanding of the world by (Czarniawska & Gagliardi, 2003). Zeroing in on emerging narratives, as well as studying their types and recurring stories, helps in understanding the deeper layers of social fabric (Avital et al., 2023; Lewis, 2017; Patuelli & Saracco, 2023), allowing for decoding and interpreting of the culture war (Alieva et al., 2023; Thomas, 2016). Twitter's narrations are different from those being told by individuals (Sadler, 2018). Stories found in social media can reach various type of users, the user isn't defined as it is in traditional conversation. Thus, users with large audience can change the social debate and influence their followers. N. Sadler (2018) claims that "such collective action, and the influence of elite users with large followership, loosely defined, but nonetheless relatively stable, narrative constellations – groups of tweets loosely bound together through the repetition of keywords and hashtags and connections established through networks of retweeting and favoring – emerge over time". In the context of those interconnections, we can distinguish diverse categories of narrative structures typical for specific thematic thread. According to the assumptions of this method, it is first necessary to distinguish "the noise" of irrelevant entries to the topic and extract those having an essential role in the database. Conducting a narrative analysis on Tweets is bounded by the characteristic of this medium. Twitter promotes posts with strong emotions and dynamic discussions (Gwen Bouvier, 2020). Therefore, our research included a comprehensive analysis of emotions bounded by images and texts appearing in posts.

### **Analysis**

#### **I. Metadata**

Within the analyzed corpus, the tweet with the highest popularity, gauged by likes and retweets, amassed 2,328 likes and 772 retweets. This tweet was published on February 13, 2023. It was a tweet about the Ukrainian restaurant in Warsaw called "Lviv Table" ("Lwowski Stolik"). Author of this tweet pointed out that the restaurant has decorated the entrance with the colors of the UON-UPA (The Ukrainian Insurgent Army). "I appeal to the residents of Warsaw to urgently intervene. The peak of insolence of Ukrainians living in Poland reaches its zenith!!!" - wrote the author.

The mean count for likes stood at 961, with a standard deviation of 428, while the retweets averaged 205, with a standard deviation of 127. As for replies, the most engaging tweet attracted 683 replies and was published on February 14, 2023. The mean reply count was 123, with a standard deviation of 116. These statistics elucidate a substantial variability in the popularity of the analyzed posts.

Our examination revealed that a mere two tweets within the analyzed set were retweets, underscoring a preference for original content among users. Furthermore, a significant proportion of tweets, though not retweets in the strictest sense, incorporated screenshots of content from other accounts. Notably, our analysis illuminated that the majority of user dialogues were located within the comment sections rather than dispersed across user profiles via the retweet functionality to comment on others' tweets. This finding suggests a tendency for discourse to be contained within the context of specific posts.

#### **II. Contents**

Every tweet in our analysis contained textual content and diverse forms of media were interspersed: 23 tweets incorporated photos, 14 featured videos, one deployed a meme, and six referenced an external link. When considering the volume of likes,

tweets interspersed with photos or videos consistently outperformed those devoid of additional media content. In contrast, hashtags did not appear to hold significant sway within our dataset, with a sparse utilization of only three unique hashtags. Moreover, user mentions were similarly scarce, with only five distinct profiles invoked. Notably, the profile of the Law and Justice (PiS), the right-wing populist ruling party was cited in three separate tweets, standing out in the modest pool of profile mentions.

1. Figure 1 - contents of Tweets.

### III. Basic message

The majority of the analyzed tweets delved into societal and political discourse. We discerned a variety of primary themes within some tweets, such as politics blending with society or culture merging with societal elements. Culture, as a category, was generally deployed in instances where users broached national cultural themes, often representing culture as a sphere of Polish life and tradition being eclipsed by the influx of Ukrainian refugees.

Among the 50 scrutinized tweets, 46 underscored some form of conflict, consequently portraying negative characters. The positive portrayal was predominantly reserved for Poles staunchly defending their national values, with Russia and Hungarian politician László Toroczkai being exceptions. In contrast, negative portrayals extended to Ukraine, President Zelensky, Ukrainian refugees, President Joe Biden, President Andrzej Duda, the Polish government (given their support for Ukraine), Law and Justice Party (PiS) politicians, and Polish celebrities Radosław Majdan and Małgorzata Rozenek-Majdan, as well as the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA, Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiia). While the prevailing sentiment within the analyzed material was negative, only 9 tweets explicitly called for action.

Linguistically, anti-Ukrainian sentiments manifested in 27 tweets through derogatory nouns and in 18 tweets via denigrating adverbs. Typical instances involved replacing negative adjectives with deprecatory phrases like "Ukrainian," "savages from Ukraine," or labeling Poles aiding Ukrainian refugees as "Ukrophiles." Curse words associated with Ukrainians surfaced in some tweets. Though the emotional spectrum was broad, indignation (17) and anger (15) were most prominent. Other sentiments included contempt (11) and fear (8), the latter often elicited by narratives about crimes committed by Ukrainian refugees.

Indignation and anger frequently surfaced in relation to narratives of Ukrainian cultural "appropriation" and the display of Ukrainian national symbols. Historical events, like the Volyn Massacre or attacks by the UPA on Polish troops, often elicited these emotions. References to national traumas occurred in 11 tweets, with 6 alluding to the UPA and 4 invoking Stepan Bandera (leader of OUN-B), indicating a deliberate effort to heighten the polarity between Poles and Ukrainians. Notably, the pro-Russian narrative positions Poland and Ukraine as adversaries (Olchowski, 2019), and the mention of Stepan Bandera is considered a crucial element in narratives framing modern Ukraine from a Polish perspective, given the historically negative context.

We identified anti-Ukrainian sentiments in 48 tweets, categorizing these arguments into six main themes, encompassing the display of Ukrainian culture, the establishment of Ukrainian restaurants in Poland, crimes committed by Ukrainian refugees, financing the Ukrainian war through Polish taxes, perceived hypocrisy of Polish politicians supporting Ukrainians, and a perceived dismissal of past Ukrainian crimes against Poles. Pro-Russian arguments, identified in 7 tweets, primarily justified Russian military actions and cautioned against provoking a nuclear-armed Russia.

### IV. Narrative and rhetorical analysis

Within the subsequent section of our coding key, we delved into the textual content of the tweets, delineating rhetorical and narrative techniques therein. Our primary observations culminated in the creation of a typology for the three most prevalent narratives, a methodology grounded in critical discourse analysis, which asserts that language itself is a conduit of ideology, and it "occupies a pivotal, yet often overlooked, role in perpetuating, producing, and reproducing societal inequalities" (Lin 2014). We classified the narratives into three principal categories:

1. Narratives centered around crimes committed by Ukrainians - encapsulated in 5 instances.
2. Narratives highlighting the alleged appropriation of Polish culture by displaying Ukrainian nationality - observed in 37 instances.
3. Narratives invoking historical trauma within Polish-Ukrainian relations - present in 13 instances.

Additionally, narratives featuring pro-Russian sentiment were represented in 3 cases, while a single case conveyed an anti-war narrative.

2. Figure 2 - number of narrative types in sample data.

The three narrative types we identified align with findings from research on hate speech and disinformation pertaining to Ukraine (Sęk, 03.2023). The total does not amount to 50, as multiple narrative types were often present within a single tweet. Previous research into hate speech targeting minorities in Poland (Winiewski et al., 2017) discovered that approximately 80% of hate speech directed at Ukrainians was rooted in historical events, with 12.5% associated with criminal activity. Notably, the facility with which emotionally powerful narratives can be generated is underpinned by historical contexts that have been sources of conflict over the years. For example, Narrative 3 often highlighted the longstanding historical conflict between Poles and Ukrainians, centered around events such as the Volhynia Massacre, the actions of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and the January and Kościuszko Uprisings.

Meanwhile, the strategy of inciting fear within the Polish populace through the news of violent crimes committed by Ukrainians mirrors narratives propagated during the 2015 European migrant crisis (Grabowska, 2022). All tweets encompassed within Narrative 1 highlighted the brutality of Ukrainian refugees, reporting severe crimes, including assaults, murders, and instances of evading justice. This narrative is based on inner fear of losing security in the country.

Narrative 2, alternatively, capitalizes on a fear of cultural appropriation of Polish traditions. This is exemplified in the display of Ukrainian flags and symbols, the establishment of Ukrainian restaurants, and participation in Ukrainian cultural events in Poland. Users advancing this narrative often urged Poles to remove Ukrainian flags and boycott Ukrainian restaurants. This narrative extended to instances such as the Royal Castle in Warsaw adorned with Polish and Ukrainian flags.

In our analysis, we identified rhetorical devices associated with amplifying emotional responses, including hyperbole (21 instances) and exclamation (10 instances). Additional figures of speech were also deployed, such as metaphor (16), irony (7), ellipsis (15), rhetorical question (16), comparison (7), metonymy (2), synecdoche (1), labeling (5), anaphora (1), apostrophe (2), periphrasis (1), enumeration (4), and diminutive forms (1).

This use of rhetorical devices in the analyzed tweets appears to be a deliberate strategy to amplify potent emotions such as indignation, anger, fear, and contempt, which we previously discussed.

From a sociological perspective, anti-Ukrainian sentiment appears to unify lower and middle-class populations in Poland (Sadura, 2022). Many instances of anti-Ukrainian rhetoric and hate speech are disseminated via social media and everyday conversations. The anonymity provided by the internet often facilitates the sharing of socially disapproved opinions. This is

evident in the simplistic sentences and unsophisticated vocabulary of anti-Ukrainian tweets, often demonstrating a lack of respect toward the criticized group. Notably, Poles aiding Ukrainian refugees were frequently labeled as hypocrites.

It's essential to underline that these observed characteristics align with the attributes of hate speech. According to Twitter's researchers, the platform itself amplifies hate speech through the retweeting feature (Kwok & Wang, 2013). We align with the definition of hate speech as "any speech which attacks an individual or a group with an intention to hurt or disrespect based on identity of a person" (Chetty & Alathur, 2018). Hateful texts in the researched database inflict direct and indirect harm upon Ukrainians, with their principal aim being to propagate hateful beliefs.

#### V. Visual analysis

The final portion of our coding key involved an analysis of the visual elements present within the tweets. Photos were featured in 23 tweets, while videos were incorporated in 14. A singular tweet showcased a meme. The two most popular tweets within our data sample combined text and images. The narrative at the core of the message was frequently amplified through visualization; in 34 out of the 50 analyzed tweets, we observed a syncretism between text and image, inducing cognitive reinforcement.

The most interacted-with tweet, accumulating 2,328 likes, 187 responses, and 780 retweets, revolved around a Ukrainian restaurant in Warsaw named "Lviv Table" ("Lwowski Stolik"). The restaurant's entrance was adorned with red and black balloons, colors the author claims represent the UPA. The author implored the Warsaw authorities to close the restaurant and encouraged negative reviews on Google Maps. This tweet embodies Narrative 2.

Another highly engaged tweet featured a photo of celebrities Małgorzata Rozenek-Majdan (journalist) and her husband Radosław Majdan (soccer player), alongside their children, each brandishing Ukrainian flags. This tweet elicited 1,625 likes, 683 responses, and 157 retweets, exemplifying Narrative 2, emphasizing the display of Ukrainian flags. The photo was taken during a campaign where celebrities were aiding Ukrainian refugees. In this context, merely holding a flag evoked negative commentary.

Frequently, the focal subject of the photo or video related to President Biden's visit to Poland in February 2023, including images of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, Andrzej Duda with Joe Biden, etc. Positive symbolism was depicted through the Polish flag and the eagle, while negative connotations were linked to Ukrainian national symbols such as the flag and coat of arms. In three instances, both the American and Ukrainian flags were presented negatively due to Joe Biden's visit. The only example of Russian symbolism was negatively portrayed via a Russian flag featuring a black swastika at the center.

#### VI. Narratives Framed Within Paul Chilton's Model

The culmination of our research involved integrating the three narratives into a discursive model to highlight their distinctions. We adopted Paul Chilton's model, acclaimed for his exploration of political discourses (Chilton, 2004), as his theory underscores the interplay among politics, society, and language. Additionally, Chilton investigated implicatures based on racial and nationality-associated stereotypes. For instance, in his work, "Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice" (Chilton, 2004), he scrutinizes the implicature associated with the term "Negroes". In our three anti-Ukrainian narratives, similar messages based on social prejudices linked to Ukrainians are discernible.

A further component in Chilton's theory that is manifested in our research material is framing, defined as the "long-term knowledge," schema, or aspect of social experience in a specific culture (Chilton, 2004). Undeniably, all three narratives draw upon this framing concept, portraying Ukrainians as a threatening nation intent on usurping Polish culture and historically embroiled in numerous conflicts with the Polish populace.

Chilton asserts that the creation of meaning in discourse hinges on the sense (as construed through mental models) and reference. He posits that texts can generate cognitive structures, termed discourse ontologies, in the minds of listeners (Chilton, 2004). These structures can be depicted on a multidimensional graph comprising three axes - time (t), space (s), and modality (m), with the deictic center located at their intersection.

3. Figure 3. Paul Chilton's Model. Paul Chilton, 2004, *Analyzing political discourse*, p. 58.

In the context of the three distinguished narratives, each corresponds with different levels of perceived security breaches. The first narrative, centered on potential victimhood due to crimes perpetrated by Ukrainians, closely aligns with the present time, thereby proximate to the deictic center. The second narrative engages with the usurpation of Polish culture and national symbols by demonstrating Ukrainian national symbols, a concern grounded in current societal apprehensions following the influx of Ukrainian refugees in Poland post-war. The final narrative engages historical events and unresolved issues in Polish-Ukrainian political relations, thereby resurrecting fears from past events like the Volyn massacre.

Based on our typology, we can situate the three narratives within Paul Chilton's model as follows:

Narrative 1 - Crimes committed by Ukrainians

Narrative 2 - Appropriation of Polish culture by exhibiting Ukrainian nationality

Narrative 3 - Highlighting historical trauma in Polish-Ukrainian relations

4. Anti-Ukrainian narratives in Paul Chilton's Model.

It should be noticed that all three narrations are associated with stereotypes created in discourse and are strongly bounded by negative emotions. In this context, we perceive stereotypes as simplistic thinking based on cognitive errors (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). Stereotypes make information processing easier because they are based on socially transmitted knowledge. Moreover, stereotypes serve a particular function depending on the context in which they appear. In the analyzed Tweets, stereotypes simplify the social reality, which can contribute to the maintenance of hateful attitudes and prejudices.

In this case, we should deepen the meaning of stereotypes in narrations. Undoubtedly, the anti-Ukrainian discourse is based on stereotypes, and it is an example of exclusionary discourses similar to racism (Ruth Wodak, 2005).

According to Tajfel and Biling's sacrificial lamb model, collective aggression against the selected social group results from collectively shared ideologies adopted to explain large-scale social events (Glick, 2009). In our case, it could be the war in Ukraine, the influx of many refugees, or rising inflation in Poland. Based on this model, we observe that if many individuals are affected by the same social changes, they will seek an explanation at the collective level. The scapegoated group according to Glick is believed to be very dangerous and powerful. This power is often overestimated in the scapegoating ideology, which justifies aggression against the chosen group. In our case, such ideology appeared mainly in narratives 2 and 3. In narration 1, Ukrainians were portrayed as dangerous people, who commit brutal crimes against Polish people. This narration was already used in Poland regarding immigrants from Africa and the Middle East. However, overall in examined narrations, we observed only two out four factors of scapegoat theory.

It is important to mention that many years before the war started, Ukrainians were migrating to Poland due to economic reasons. In the report about hate speech in Poland from 2016, we can read that there were cases of verbal and physical assaults on people from Ukraine (Winiewski et al., 2017). One of the strongly resounding conclusions from the report is that the main source of hate speech in Poland is the Internet. Moreover, in two years 2014-2016, the percentage of adult Poles who have been exposed to anti-Ukrainian content on the Internet has increased from 46.2% to 70.7%. Thus, we must admit that public sentiment is not only related to the war, but it is a part of a long-term process of attitude formation. In the context

of the discourse analysis, it should be affirmed that anti-Ukrainian narrative can be a way of understanding the world around us and a mirror of public sentiment.

Stereotypes that appeared in anti-Ukrainian narrations can be also placed in the stereotype content model by Susan Fiske. In this model, stereotypes are settled in two axes - warmth and competence (Fiske, 2018). Warmth is associated with friendliness and trustworthiness, competences are based on capability and assertiveness. In this model, immigrants from Ukraine should be defined as a group with low warmth and low competences. According to Fiske, such groups evoke such emotions as disgust and contempt. These emotions were also mentioned in narrative and rhetorical analysis (Part IV).

#### VII. Discussion

Our qualitative analysis carried out on Tweets selected by Thick Big Data method (Jemielniak, 2020) illustrates three main narratives with anti-Ukrainian character. Various sociological and discursive models demonstrate that such narratives are based on negative stereotypes and can develop or perpetuate attitudes of resentment towards migrants from Ukraine. Earlier studies conducted on hate speech against Ukrainians indicated increases in such trends even a few years before the war - in years 2014-2016 (Winiewski et al., 2017). Now we can observe further development of this phenomenon. Anti-Ukrainian tweets are reaching wide followers and due to controversial, strong beliefs are causing strong emotional responses and comments. Crucial political events, such as diplomatic visits by heads of state - President's Biden visit to Warsaw, during which topics related to the war in Ukraine are discussed, serve as a catalyst for the proliferation of anti-Ukrainian publications. Big political events can be a flash point and a breeding ground for controversial views that are far from political correctness. Moreover, a series of 10 Tweets concentrated on President's Biden visit to Warsaw could have been part of a disinformation campaign because their message was very similar and contained a strong negative bias towards President Joe Biden and the war in Ukraine.

The above analysis can be complemented by additional concept of power structures in discourse that are distinguished by Van Dijk. In this model (Van Dijk, 1989) power holders can produce and reproduce social power structures. Given the specifics of our study, several power structures in each narrative were noticed. In all narratives, Twitter can be described as media power structure, because on this platform were the insights published. Twitter have power over sharing and blocking information. According to the narrative and rhetorical analysis, politicians are also power structures. Presidents of Poland, Ukraine and the USA were mentioned among positive and negative characters in basic message of analyzed tweets.

Furthermore, in this discourse language can be definitely characterized as a power structure, because means of languages express emotions and build narrations. In these sense, language as a power structure in discourse can shape opinions and attitudes. Twitter as a modern tool of political communication play a leading role in shaping social attitudes towards the migration politics and can bias voters against certain social groups or nationalities.

History is a crucial element of Polish-Ukrainian relations, historical interpretations of conflicts were often used to build negative narrations. Thus, in narration 2 and 3, history, especially from the twentieth century, can be seen as a power structure. History is also used to enhance polarization between "we" - Polish people and "they" - Ukrainians. This type of narration enhances polarization in Polish political scene, that is strongly defined between two main parties and their allies - conservative Law and Justice (PiS) and centrist Citizens' Party (PO).

We have to admit that anti-Ukrainian narration is officially spread only by one political party - a strongly conservative Confederation (Konfederacja). Thus, this kind of narrative shared in social media is an outlet for political correctness for people who are afraid to be negatively judged in public for their opinions. The official discourse shared by political officials is



		<p>strongly supportive of Ukraine, consequently, it is marginalizing individuals holding dissenting views. As a part of the spiral of silence, Polish people who aren't supporting the Ukrainian war refugees share their views online, remaining anonymous. On the other hand, we observe a spiral of silence that excludes anti-Ukrainian views and people who have a different opinion about helping Ukraine (this is also the official government narrative) from the official discourse and the old media - TV, press. Twitter is a place where controversial opinions are spread in order to find other users thinking alike or to enhance the culture and political war. Most of the Tweets (37) contained narration highlighting the alleged appropriation of Polish culture through the display of Ukrainian nationality. Such narration strongly influences a sense of insecurity and alienation in one's own country, which already present in places with a high percentage of people from Ukraine. Further research on Polish-Ukrainian relations would enhance the understanding of each other's struggles. The results presented in this article could be complemented by analysis of narratives from traditional media to juxtapose them with narratives from Twitter. It is necessary to monitor online platforms for hate speech and reflect on consequences of spreading such discourse. Ongoing sociodemographic changes are impacting the resulting social discourse in Poland, social media platforms like Twitter can provide valuable insights about them. Poland is particularly vulnerable to disinformation campaigns with an anti-Ukrainian narrative. Furthermore, future researchers should consider conducting in-depth interviews to gain a broader understanding of anti-Ukrainian attitudes and the prevalence of hate speech in Poland.</p>
	<p>Paweł Matuszewski (Collegium Civitas)</p>	<p><b><i>Conspiracy Theorists' Communication Patterns After the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022: An Analysis of Prevalence, Mechanisms, and Cultural Embeddedness</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Conspiracy theories may increase in crises (Uscinski 2020; Uscinski and Parent 2014). The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 gave rise to numerous emerging conspiracy theories, which have since continued to evolve, leading to the prevailing perception that such narratives have proliferated.</p> <p>I conduct an analysis of the prevalence of conspiracy theories in political communication, focusing on the mechanisms by which they are promulgated and discussed. My study reveals that conspiratorial political discourse deviates from non-conspiratorial one and is also internally inconsistent, with various factions within the conspiracy theory community developing their own unique approaches to perception, classification, attention, and interpretation. To account for the popularity of conspiracy theories, I argue that their appeal is grounded in their cultural embeddedness and is influenced by macro-level factors, such as political crises, wars, and pandemics. In order to explain the differential popularity of different conspiracy theories, it is crucial to consider the unique ways in which they diverge from established knowledge “defined as shared, justified and generally accepted (‘true’) social beliefs and their discursive reproduction in epistemic communities and in society at large” (Dijk, 2014, p. 93).</p> <p><b>Theoretical perspective</b></p> <p>I define conspiracy theories as explanations of significant events as coordinated hidden acts of at least two actors whose aim is to affect society or its part negatively (Douglas et al., 2019; Knight, 2001; Moore, 2018; Popper, 2006).</p> <p>The diffusion of conspiracy theories is quite difficult to explain if we assume that there are universal certain features that make them appealing. For instance, more nearly half of Portuguese (47%) believed in 2016 that “Regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organisations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together”, while in the same time agreed to this statement 10% of Swedes and 27% of Poles (Uscinski et al. 2022). The likely factor responsible for the adoption of conspiracy theories and its changes in time is related to culture, and how well</p>

they are congruent with the shared beliefs (Byford, 2011; Drązkiewicz, 2022; Knight, 2001). Furthermore, even in the same society, some conspiracy theories are more and some less believable. Therefore, I suggest theoretical frameworks that differentiate conspiracy theories based on how much conspiracy beliefs deviate from conventional knowledge. I use Zerubavel's (1999) concept of thought communities to seize this idea.

A thought community is a social environment which socialises its members to process, collect, and recall information in a specific, transsubjective way. In other words, Zerubavel emphasises that humans are cognitively diversified because of social causes. The differences involve six major cognitive acts: perceiving, attending, classifying, assigning meaning, remembering, and reckoning time. The differences exist because people are members of different thought communities, such as churches, professions, nations, generations, etc.

This framework is different from the distinction between rational and irrational beliefs of conspiracies or whether the beliefs are true. Such classifications are not easy to implement, the reasoning process is not easy to reconstruct, and some conspiracy theories have proven true or may be accepted in the future (Birchall, 2020; Huneman & Vorms, 2018; Pigden, 2007). Instead of assuming that conspiracy theories are silly, inferior, or unbelievable, I assume that they may be rational because people have good transsubjective reasons to believe in them (Pigden 2007). As such, being a member of a particular thought community (a specific cognitive context), people may have strong and shared reasons that make conspiracy theories believable and rational (Boudon, 1997, 2011). Simultaneously, members of other thought communities may have reasons to refute the same conspiracy theories.

#### **Data & methods**

Utilizing a dataset of tweets that mentioned, replied or were authored by Polish politicians and political parties (N = 21,444,762, collected between January 2022 and March 2023), the study employs an algorithm with an F1 score exceeding 90% to detect conspiracy beliefs. The methodology incorporates word embedding for keyword inference and Thick Big Data, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative content analysis (Ganczewski & Jemielniak, 2022). In the case of conspiracy theories about the war in Ukraine I randomly sampled 1000 documents for qualitative content analysis.

#### **Results**

Using content analysis, I differentiated conspiracy theories based on their deviations from conventional knowledge. There are three main levels of conspiracy. Level 1 conspiracies are largely congruent with shared beliefs and serve as specific interpretations of real actors' actions. In this category fall all theories that classify reality and focus on the same events as historians, sociologists, or political scientists. The interpretation involves conventional solutions such as motives (money, power), personal traits (evil, hateful, treacherous) or social background (relatives of secret police agents). However, the interpretation of the event does not make epistemic sense in reference to conventional knowledge. For example, alleged treason for national interest (for Russia or Ukraine) is not supported by a profound analysis of the event (e.g., the outcomes are against the interest of the alleged principal), or there is no evidence of connections between the traitor and the principal. Level 2 conspiracies include elements that bend the conventional knowledge. Conspiracy theorists use classifications that include a mixture of plausible and real actors with improbable purposes. Examples of the first are NWO, Elders of Zion or secret representations of Jews, Khazars, and Satanists. Examples of the latter are the World Economic Forum, Bilderberg meetings or Jesuits. What differentiates these theories from conventional explanations of political events is the focus on the alleged big goals of conspiring groups, such as the enslavement of citizens (total control, removal of fundamental rights) or depopulation. Consequently, political events or decisions are considered to follow or oppose these goals, and responsible

		<p>actors obtain unrealistic possibilities, such as omnipotence in controlling all political events. Level 3 conspiracies are considered extreme. They deviate significantly from conventional knowledge. Conspiracy theorists classify political reality based on the classes specific to this thought community and their unconventional perception of reality, for example, into unreal and real Polish (Slavians; Sławianie, not Slavs/Slavic; Słowianie) according to their number of blood channels (16, while Ukrainians have 13 or fewer) and origin (Poles are descendants of blue-eyed God Thot). The focus is on issues absent in conventional political discourses and lower-lever conspiracy theories, such as human souls or secret ethnic origins. Finally, assigning meaning includes refuting basic scientific knowledge (biology, physics, history) or other shared beliefs (for example, Christian God, meaning assigned to national symbols) and forming a new belief system.</p> <p>The results of the quantitative analysis show that conspiracy narratives have gained diversified attention (see Fig. 1). The most frequent were tweets about the pandemic (10%) and national treason conspiracy theories (9.6%). Less popular was content related to the escalation of war in Ukraine after February 2022 (5.9%) and ecology (2.5%). Plots such as LGBT, Slavians, or mystic conspiracies are discussed in a significantly smaller percentage of political discourse (each representing less than 1%). This suggests that specific beliefs and narratives in conspiracy theories may vary in popularity and attention within the political sphere and the higher the level of conspiracy the less diffused the theory is.</p>
14:15-16.00	<p><b>1.8 Media &amp; Health Communication (I)*</b>  <b>Chairs: Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska, Agnieszka Hess</b></p> <p>Room 1.128</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Azi Lev-on (Ariel University);  Yehudit Yahazkeli (Ariel University)</p>	<p><b><i>Lessons from Senior Journalists' Coverage of the First Wave of COVID-19: The Significance of Scientific Research and Hybrid Work</i></b></p> <p>Numerous papers explored the media coverage of the COVID-19 crisis in mainstream and social media. However, research examining the experiences of journalists are missing. This study is based on 20 interviews with prominent journalists from various media outlets—print, internet, television, and radio—who served as field reporters, health journalists, or editors during the first wave of the pandemic in Israel, regarding their observations on how the pandemic influenced and transformed the journalistic practice. The study revealed two key findings. Firstly, there was a renewed appreciation for basing journalistic reporting on solid scientific evidence. Secondly, there was a growing recognition of the importance of hybrid coverage, acknowledging that future reporting would increasingly include broadcasts from reporters' homes or locations in close proximity to them.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>In 2020, the world witnessed the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, an event that created unprecedented challenges for journalists. As the pandemic rapidly unfolded, journalists found themselves grappling with uncertainty, a lack of reliable information, and the blurring of work-life boundaries. This research delves into the difficulties faced by journalists during this crisis and examines their response to these challenges, particularly their increasing reliance on scientific research and the adoption of hybrid work models.</p> <p><b>Research questions</b></p>

- a. Did the coverage of COVID-19 contribute to an emphasis on the importance of solid scientific studies?
- b. Did the coverage of COVID-19 contribute to an emphasis on hybrid work?

**Research expectations**

Based on the literature surveyed above, we expect to find that:

- a. The coverage of COVID-19 led to a renewed recognition of the importance of scientific research.
- b. The coverage of COVID-19 highlighted the significance of hybrid coverage, with an understanding that remote broadcasting from the homes of reporters or nearby locations will continue to increase alongside broadcasting from studios.

**Method**

We conducted interviews with 20 prominent reporters and editors who covered the first wave of COVID-19. The sample was selected from the list of health reporters provided by Ifat, a company that monitors Israeli media. The sampling method aimed to ensure a comprehensive and representative representation of reporters and editors who covered the initial wave of COVID-19 across various platforms, including print, radio, TV, and internet-based journalism. Recruiting participants was facilitated by the reputation of one of the writers as a leading journalist, and the sample includes influential journalists from all the outlets we approached.

The focus of the study was on the first wave of COVID-19 as it was accompanied by uncertainty, fears, and administrative challenges that were more prominent and significant compared to subsequent waves when familiarity and coping mechanisms were more established. The interviews took place 2-3 months after the first wave had ended to ensure that the information was still fresh in the minds of the interviewees. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at convenient locations chosen by the interviewees.

The interviews encompassed a range of topics, including the practical aspects of their work, the role of journalists in the coverage, the locations where the coverage took place, and the characteristics of the COVID-19 coverage. Participants were asked about their experiences in coping with the crisis and the impact it had on them both professionally and personally. Furthermore, their level of interest and curiosity about the pandemic during the initial wave, when limited information was available, was also explored.

**Findings: The Role of Health Communication in Crisis Reporting**

Health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic trigger an increased demand for information to alleviate public uncertainty. This responsibility falls heavily on the shoulders of the media, which serves as the primary source of information. However, during crises, there's a risk of misinformation, panic, and the spread of unverified news. As journalists sought to provide the public with accurate information, they often grappled with their lack of medical expertise (Basch, Kecojevic & Wagner, 2020).

Journalists faced a delicate balancing act in reporting the pandemic. On one hand, they needed to disseminate critical information about the crisis, and on the other, they had to ensure that the information was both reliable and understandable to the public. This balancing act became especially challenging as the pandemic generated anxiety, misinformation, and even conspiracy theories (Alkhodair et al., 2021).

Given these challenges, journalists recognized the need to rely on scientific research and expert sources. They understood that evidence-based reporting was essential in providing accurate and trustworthy information to the public (Nisbet & Fahy, 2015; Ward, 2018). This shift toward a more knowledge-based form of journalism enhanced their professionalism and helped counter misinformation.

**The Changing Journalistic Work Environment**

		<p>The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a shift in the journalistic work environment. Traditional newsrooms began to transform as journalists embraced a more digital and remote-friendly model of reporting. The pandemic acted as a catalyst for this change, prompting a reevaluation of traditional work routines and practices.</p> <p>The emergence of hybrid work models became a defining feature of this transition (Gruber, 2021). Journalists realized that working from home could be as effective, if not more so, than reporting from traditional newsrooms. Not only did this reduce the risk of virus exposure, but it also opened up new opportunities for reporting (Perreault &amp; Perreault, 2021).</p> <p>The shift to hybrid work brought with it several benefits. It allowed journalists to balance their professional duties with self-care and family life, promoting well-being and job satisfaction. Journalists recognized the importance of maintaining their mental health and reducing the risks associated with the pandemic (Perreault &amp; Perreault, 2021).</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>The first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic transformed journalistic practice. Journalists, confronted with unprecedented challenges, recognized the significance of relying on scientific research and expert sources to provide accurate and reliable information to the public. This shift toward evidence-based journalism enhanced their professionalism and countered misinformation.</p> <p>Additionally, the pandemic accelerated the adoption of hybrid work models, allowing journalists to report from home and remote locations. This shift improved their work-life balance and well-being, highlighting the importance of supporting journalists' psychological health during crises. As the world grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, journalists adapted to new challenges, transforming their approach to reporting and embracing a more evidence-based and flexible working model.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic brought forth unique challenges for journalists, emphasizing the importance of evidence-based reporting and hybrid work models. Journalists recognized the significance of grounding their reports in scientific research and consulting expert sources. They also adopted a new working paradigm, embracing the flexibility of hybrid work arrangements, including remote reporting. These changes have had a lasting impact on journalism, promoting professionalism and well-being among journalists during times of crisis.</p>
	<p>Weronika Świerczyńska-Głownia (Jagiellonian University)</p>	<p><b><i>COVID-19 pandemic in media discourse in Poland - analysis of media messages and their social effects</i></b></p> <p>The speech is a summary of the research project conducted by researchers of the Jagiellonian University to depict the media discourse regarding Covid-19 from the time of the first information about the disease - December 2019, through the moment when the Minister of Health introduced the state of epidemic threat in Poland (March 12, 2020) until March 25 - in which a ban was introduced to leave home without a clear vital need. The analysis conducted allowed us to obtain answers to the following questions:</p> <p>How is the narrative around Covid-19 changing along the timeline?</p> <p>a) what terms are used by the studied media at the beginning of the epidemic (e.g.: Covid-19, coronavirus, disease, epidemic, threat, quarantine and in what context.)</p> <p>b) when the narrative changes to "pandemic" (time correlation [or lack thereof] with WHO announcements - has the media overtaken WHO in the narrative?)</p> <p>c) when negative words begin to dominate or appear: (virus, threat, help, fear, death, death, drama, despair, quarantine, crisis, panic and in what context)</p>

		<p>d) when positive words begin to dominate or appear: (hope, solidarity, help, support, "grassroots initiative", recoverers and in what context)</p> <p>The analysis of the media discourse regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular illustrating its changes (emotional character, context) and the diversity of the narrative, taking into account the broadcasting message - in the assumed time perspective - allowed</p> <p>a) obtain information whether the message of the examined media was neutral (strictly informative) or whether it was (and to what extent) emotionally charged (persuasive), and what potential impact the media messages constructed in this way could have on the social mood.</p> <p>b) develop recommendations (expert recommendations) regarding the standards of media reporting on events that have a fundamental impact on the functioning of society.</p> <p>The project was implemented using the CLARIN scientific and research infrastructure (Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure), which is part of the European Roadmap for Scientific Infrastructures (ESFRI - European Roadmap for Research Infrastructures, European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) covering digital text archives and advanced research tools for their automatic analysis.</p> <p>Methodology:</p> <p>The analysis was carried out using statistical corpus and lexical analysis and emotive analysis tools. The analysis methods will include time stamps and correlation recognition using the so-called topic modeling - allowing the extraction of thematic threads from texts about the coronavirus and illustrating the variability of discourse in specific time periods.</p> <p>Samples for the study were obtained by automatically downloading data for Frazeo.pl and the Monco browser. The adopted data acquisition method enabled an effective and complete way to obtain data for the planned analysis.</p> <p>The study used texts published on 6 online platforms:</p> <p>a) three main internet portals: Onet; Wp; Interia.</p> <p>b) three main online news television platforms: TVN24; PolsatNews; TVPInfo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study period covered the period from December 15, 2019 to April 24, 2020.</li> <li>• Quantitative data: all documents (samples) obtained from Monco/Frazeo.pl: 78019</li> </ul> <p>The obtained samples were verified based on selected keywords (list of words) that were considered related to the topic of the pandemic (Covid-19). These words were also displayed on the frequency list.</p> <p>The project also used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. topic modeling - performed using the standard Latent Dirichlet Allocation algorithm with two variations of the number of topics: 30 and 50.</li> <li>2. textual analysis of emotions - in emotive analysis, a balanced model was constructed.</li> </ol>
	<p>Anna Barańska-Szmitko (Lodz University)</p>	<p><b><i>The role of authenticity in creating of a bond between non-expert YouTubers talking about mental health and their audiences</i></b></p> <p><b>The study purpose</b></p> <p>The purpose of the paper is to investigate the role of authenticity of non-expert mental health and well-being YouTubers in creating a bond between them and their audience. In order to achieve this aim the content of videos of selected YouTubers</p>

is analyzed according to Simon Luebke's model of authenticity and it is compared with the analysis of comments posted below the videos.

**Main theoretical framework/ assumptions**

The current research shows that more and more people need psychological support, especially after the pandemic (e. g. Ausín et al., 2022; Barbieri et al., 2021; Charpentier et al., 2022; Cielo et al., 2021; Giuntella et al., n.d.; Kutsar & Kurvet-Käosaar, 2021; Miranda-Mendizabal et al., 2022). So-called Generation Z is closely affected by the sequelae of the pandemic and the global mental health crisis (Jawed & Zaim, 2023) - the number of mental problems has been increasing after pandemic especially among patients aged under 13 and ages 13–25 (American Psychological Association, 2022). According to NPD Group in 2013 sales of self-help books topped 1.4 million units in the U.S., and in 2019 it was 4.3 million units what shows that current societies need self-help content. YouTube has become one of the most frequently used sources of knowledge, including knowledge concerning mental health and well-being (a.o. Lam et al., 2017; Langford & Loeb, 2019; Harris et al., 2021). 77% of adolescents between 15-25 years old are YouTube users (Shepherd, 2023). Approximately 70% of other age groups use this platform (Shepherd, 2023). The positive impact on mentally-ill individuals who have created their own communities has been proven (Balcombe & De Leo, 2023; King & McCashin, 2022; McLellan et al., 2022; Naslund et al., 2016). The viewers prefer to watch videos that do not look very professional and contain personal narratives (Oliphant, 2013),(Langford & Loeb, 2019) (Harris et al., 2021). Thus, investigating the communication practices between YouTubers and their audiences in the mental health and well-being area is needed and beneficial for organizations, public and private institutions, media and journalistic practices and for citizens.

It was decided to investigate the authenticity of the (mental health and well-being) YouTubers because authenticity is proven to be one of the strongest features of influencers, YouTubers and celebrities (e.g. Jerslev, 2016),Moodley 2019; Atton 2019; Valentinsson 2018, 2022; Drenten, Brooks 2020; Lewis 2019; Lutton 2019), creating communities and bonds is perceived as one of the crucial features of all social media, including YouTube (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Marwick, 2013; Raun, 2018; Shao, 2009; van Dijck, 2013) and authenticity can also reinforce bonds by creating trust and credibility (Ots & Abidin, n.d.; Enli & Rosenberg, 2018; Lin et al., 2016). In previous research usually only one of the authenticity dimensions has been examined, e.g. self-disclosure (Jerslev, 2016; Jerslev & Mortensen, 2018; Ferchaud et al., 2018; Marôpo et al., 2020), intimacy (Raun, 2018; Berryman & Kavka, 2017),permanent connectivity (Jerslev, 2016) or ordinariness (Gamson, 2011). There are also studies that treated authenticity as one of the features of other communication phenomena (e.g. van Driel & Dumitrica, 2021; Cunningham & Craig, 2017;García-Rapp, 2017; Jerslev, 2016; Lewis, 2020). In these papers authenticity is not usually precisely defined and seems to be understood in a similar but not the same way. Thus the all dimension of precisely defined authenticity of YouTubers representing the (important) communication area were taken into consideration in this study.

**Research questions**

The aim of this research is to examine the role of authenticity of non-expert mental health and well-being YouTubers in creating a bond between them and their audience. To achieve this goal the following questions were formulated:

1. Which dimensions of authenticity are present in the YouTuber's videos?
2. In what way is authenticity present in these videos if it is present at all?
3. What are the themes of the comments below the videos?
4. What are the references to the dimensions of authenticity constructed in the comments below and are such references present at all? What other themes are present?

**Methodological details**

Authenticity understood as a negotiated, performed and primarily mediated process (Enli, 2015; Luebke, 2021) was the interest of this study and was examined in the mental health and well-being YouTube videos by using Simon Luebke's model of authenticity (Luebke, 2021). According to this proposition mediated authenticity has four dimensions: consistency, intimacy, ordinariness, and immediacy (Luebke, 2021, cf. Enli, 2015). In the first stage of the study, these dimensions were identified (question no. 1) and qualitative analysis was conducted to determine the characteristics of each dimension in the videos (q. no. 2). Each video was treated as a whole communication piece, i.e. the verbal and audiovisual level of each video was taken into consideration. To examine the viewers' reception (q. no. 3) the thematic analysis of comments was conducted. The qualitative analysis of identified themes allowed the researcher to examine whether references to authenticity dimensions are present in the videos or not (is the content of comments similar to the content identified in the videos as the expressions of authenticity? – q. no. 4). Comparing the results of videos and comments analyses enabled the researcher to indicate similarities and differences between the YouTubers and their audiences. Focusing on the authenticity dimensions allowed the researcher to examine authenticity role in creating the bond between the participants of describing communication.

**Data**

30 videos and 100 comments below of each video of two channels (in total 60 videos and 6000 comments):

· Nathaniel Drew channel –

<https://www.youtube.com/c/nathanieldrewofficial/videos?view=0&sort=dd&flow=grid>

· Lana Blakely channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/LanaBlakely/videos>

The collected videos were published over the six-month period.

**Eligibility criteria**

Only channels where the persona of the content creator is important to a YouTube channel were considered. The channels using animation and/or a voiceover were not taken into consideration. The YouTubers who are coaches or self-help guidebook writers, and the YouTube channel is only an additional activity, were beyond the interest of this study. The channels about self-improvement or self-development understood as success and/or productivity were rejected because they focus on an objective, not mental comfort. A YouTuber was not supposed to have academic background. Thanks to it, the main reason for watching the channel is not the expert and his/her knowledge but the personality of the YouTuber. The YouTuber was visually an 'ordinary' person without an outstanding outfit what enabled him/her to avoid providing entertainment as the main reason to watch videos. YouTubers who had more than 1 million subscribers were taken into consideration because it was assumed that the more subscribers the channel has, the stronger the authenticity of the YouTuber is.

**Preliminary findings**

All four dimensions of authenticity are present in the videos of Lana Blakely (LB) and Nathaniel Drew (ND). Consistency appears to be the same approach to life and audience regardless of the main topic of a video (LB: Gotten through my experience my advice is ...; ND: What I've learned about is...). Intimacy is the dimension which is represented in the strongest way - YouTubers share a.o. personal details of their adolescence, describe places they have been to, relations with family and peers. The confessional rhetoric ('personal expressions of emotions and experience' - Torjesen, 2021) is used in each video. Both YouTubers share the feeling of anxiety, characterize their crises and their seeking purpose in life, talk about their role in



		<p>the busy current world, present their thoughts about time, relationships, motivation and emphasize the need to find their own way to solve the problems. They show ordinariness only to some extent (they have problems like everybody can nowadays have, they do not record their videos in-studio). The YouTubers do not pay much attention to immediacy. They publish their videos approximately every two weeks.</p> <p>The analysis of comments showed that the intimacy dimension of authenticity resonates the most in viewers' words - the viewers comment on the same issues that were analyzed in the videos and they describe their own experiences in the same emotional areas. They share their problems and emotions in the same way as those shared in the videos. It means that the problems of YouTubers and the viewers are the same and these problems are perceived in a similar way. Then authenticity is based on sharing similar experiences, on the union of experiences.</p> <p>There are also differences between the YouTubers and their audiences which can explain the popularity and somehow authority of YouTubers. The YouTubers seem to have found solutions to their problems. They always describe their negative feelings as something that has passed, whereas viewers share their present negative feelings. The YouTubers declare they are happy and self-fulfilled people - viewers do not feel well in their lives; YouTubers know what they want to do in the future – viewers are uncertain about their future. It seems that both the YouTubers and the viewers are able to share the same experiences and this creates their bond, whereas dealing with problems by YouTubers might allow them to play the role of leaders and/ or authorities.</p>
	<p>Nicole Krämer (University of Duisburg-Essen; Research Center Trustworthy Data Science and Security); Bianca Nowak (University of Duisburg-Essen)</p>	<p><b><i>Stumbling over Science Communication: An Empirical Investigation of Scientists' Use of Jargon and Recipients' Motivational Goals on Social Media</i></b></p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic caused a rapid increase in the spread of new scientific developments and information within the scientific community, which also expanded to “non-scientific” communities (e.g., Durazzi et al., 2021; Fraser et al., 2021). This circumstance opens up the question of what happens if the context between these different communities collapses and one message (which was initially designed to reach scholars) is received by multiple audiences with different backgrounds (Marwick &amp; Boyd, 2011). As previous research indicates, direct contact with scientists in crisis - like the Covid-19 pandemic - reduces laypersons' fear and uncertainty while increasing their self-efficiency in dealing with a threatening situation (Szczyka et al., 2020). However, scientists' communication is often characterised by the use of scientific jargon and technical terms - even if targeted towards laypersons (e.g., Baram-Tsabari et al., 2020; Rakedzon et al., 2017; Sharon &amp; Baram-Tsabari, 2014). Although "scientific language" and jargon are central components of scientific writing (Thomm &amp; Bromme, 2012), it is often problematic for laypersons to comprehend jargon and, thereby, becomes an obstacle in communication as well as causing a reduction of the contents' credibility (Bullock et al., 2019; Shulman et al., 2021). While it is suggested to avoid jargon when communicating with the public (Goldstein et al., 2020), it is essential to strike a balance, as using overly simplified language may result in misunderstandings (Rice &amp; Giles, 2017). To understand the emergence of the public discourse from the perspective of laypersons and provide evidence-backed recommendations for science communicators, we aim to examine how a lay audience reacts to scientists' use of scientific jargon.</p> <p>This information about the dialogue is also necessary to understand the perception of scientific information in social networks. User engagement not only aids in content but also plays a crucial role in shaping how they perceive it. For example, encouraging endorsement heuristics through the number of likes on a post (Taddicken &amp; Krämer, 2021) or influencing perceptions through comments (see nasty effect: Anderson et al., 2014), which can have a significant impact on the further processing of the messages. This influence can extend beyond social networks, potentially shaping the behavioural intentions</p>

of the public in real life (Kim et al., 2021). At the same time, whether social media users interact with content or information is frequently determined by their previous views. This circumstance results in a so-called confirmation bias that continues even when exposed to scientific or medical matters (e.g., Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2015; Meppelink et al., 2019). The users' willingness to confirm their views and beliefs is so persistent that they prefer attitude-consistent content – even if it is presented by questionable sources (Johnson et al., 2020; Lück & Nardi, 2019; Wischniewski et al., 2022).

Since specific motivations, like seen in the conformation bias, change how users perceive, process, and engage with messages (Pennycook et al., 2020; Winter et al., 2016), the objective of the current study is to give further insights into the mechanisms of individual engagement with science-related content online based on the heuristic systematic model of persuasion and the derived accuracy and defence motivations (Chaiken et al., 1996; Chen et al., 1999). Those motivations are assumed to influence the processing of information and, consequently, the evaluation of the content. We examine the influence of social media posts containing scientific jargon and language by manipulating whether laypeople are accuracy-motivated or defence-motivated. Thus, we expect that the influence of jargon will be smaller for accuracy-motivated participants, while the primary catalyst of the intention to engage will be a match between the posts' valance according to participants' prior views.

We further include the recipients' need for cognition, a tendency reflecting the enjoyment of effortful thinking (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982), as we expect it to interfere with their current motivational state. Additionally, we included the recipients' general trust in scientists to determine if recipients are more or less likely to mindlessly rely on scientists' information since trust can serve as a heuristic to ease decisions (Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2011).

Based on the previous explanations, we derived the following model, which reflects our assumed theoretical relations, as seen in Figure 1.

#### **Proposed Model**

Social media platforms have evolved into crucial information sources for many users as they possess significant potential for science communication (Brossard & Scheufele, 2013; Darling et al., 2013). In contrast to traditional media, social media offers the possibility of direct and unfiltered exchange between scientists and laypeople. The chance of direct contact with experts enables laypeople to verify information via dialogue and ask questions, but also to criticise and attack the scientists in comments. Hence, we focus on the different types of engagement that social media facilitates, as these indicate different levels of involvement (Taddicken & Krämer, 2021). Therefore, we also include the users' underlying intentions to gain insight into whether the information is agreed upon or not.

#### **Methods**

Using a 2 (within, jargon: present, not present) x 2 (within, attitude: consistent, inconsistent) x 3 (between, motivation: accuracy, defence, control) online experiment we will explore the influence of scientific jargon and its impact on the willingness to engage (like, share, comment) with science-related content online and shaping messages' credibility assessment. Moreover, we will investigate the impact of the recipients' motivational state on their reasons to engage with the content.

#### **Sample**

We conducted a power analysis to determine the required sample size to detect effects of at least 0.12, with an alpha level of .05 and power of at least .90 of the proposed model (Figure 1), leading to a required sample size of N = 725. Subsequently, a simulation analysis (1000 repetitions) confirmed our ability to detect standardized main effects of .109 to .117 with a range

		<p>of 88% to 96% power. The current sample consists of N = 197 participants aged 19 to 72 years, M = 31.5, SD = 9.1. Out of those 68% of the participants identified as female, 30% as male, and 2% identified as non-binary.</p> <p><b>Procedure and Measures</b></p> <p>After informing the participants about the purpose of the study and use of their data, they were asked to provide demographic information, the strength of their prior attitudes concerning different matters of the retrospective assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic (zoonotic origin of the virus: M = 5.6, SD = 1.3, need for further research: M = 5.5, SD = 1.4, appropriateness of protective measures: M = 5.9, SD = 1.2, reliance on science during the pandemic: M = 5.3, SD = 1.6), their need for cognition (BeiBert et al., 2015; M = 4.7, SD = 1.1), and general trust in scientists (McCright et al., 2013; M = 5.4, SD = 0.9). All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.</p> <p>Afterwards, they were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. Following the work of Winter et al. (2016), participants were told that they would be redirected to an online chat with another person to discuss scientists' posts, which they would be shown. Depending on the respective experimental group, they were either told to find the most accurate and reliable information (accuracy motivation), defend their views, and convince the other person (defence motivation), or to solely discuss their general impressions of science communication (control) in the upcoming chat. Then, participants were shown four posts (reflecting the scientific consensus: pro, con x scientific jargon: yes, no) on different topics surrounding the scientific discourse on the retrospective assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants were asked to rate the credibility, factualness, and truthfulness of each post. Likewise, they were asked to rate how well they understood the post and how likely they were to like, share, and comment on the respective post. Then, participants' motivational strength was measured (adapted version of Winter et al., 2016). Subsequently, they were asked for their general reasons for engaging with content online (e.g., to express appreciation, ask a question, or increase the posts' reach). Lastly, participants were debriefed and thanked.</p> <p><b>Preliminary Results</b></p> <p>According to our preregistered analysis plan, we calculated three structural equation models with the recipients' intention to 1.) like, 2.) share, and 3.) comment on a post as dependent variables. The three variables were not accumulated into one latent factor to maintain the predictive value of the analysis, leading to three separate models.</p> <p>The preliminary results underline that the use of jargon in scientists' social media posts dramatically reduces the recipients' understanding and, thereby, the posts' credibility, <math>\beta = -.090</math>, <math>p = .026</math>. However, we do not find a direct effect of either defence, <math>\beta = .883</math>, <math>p = .345</math>, or accuracy motivation, <math>\beta = .198</math>, <math>p = .832</math>, on the posts' perceived credibility nor the intention to engage with the content by any means. Further, the preliminary results show that recipients' intention to like, <math>\beta = .679</math>, <math>p &lt; .001</math>, and share, <math>\beta = .299</math>, <math>p &lt; .001</math>, a post is solely predicted by its credibility. The recipients' willingness to comment on a post is predicted by its credibility, <math>\beta = .090</math>, <math>p = .019</math>, along with valence, <math>\beta = .322</math>, <math>p = .014</math>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*Organized in cooperation with CEECOM / ECREA CEE Network</p>
14:15-16.00	<p><b>1.9. Climate Crises Communication</b>  <b>Chairs: Julia Trzcińska, Ewa Masłowska</b></p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>

	Room 1.132	
	Marcelina Zuber (University of Wroclaw)	<p><b><i>Conflictive discourses about climate crises: scientists and the media as discourse shapers</i></b></p> <p>In my presentation I would like to analyse the role of scientists – more specifically specialists in the area of climate and representatives of science communication – in shaping the public discourse of climate crisis. The discourse of science will be contrasted with the changing media discourses on this matter.</p> <p>Science is performing a crucial role in the contemporary society (Latour, 2004). On the individual scale we can observe this in our consumer choices, while on the global scale we can witness the decisions based on the scientific reports, taken by governments. Decisions of this kind referring to climate and climate change can be beneficial for the planet while having negative social and economic consequences for specific societies and social groups. Thus, the role of scientists and specialists in science communication in informing the society about the newest findings and recommendations in the area of climate protections is very important.</p> <p>In my presentation I will address the apparent tension between the assumed obligation of scientists of informing the society and their duties resulting from the professional environment they are functioning in (academic, corporate, post-academic) (Ziman 1996) and ask how this tension is reflected in shaping the public discourse on climate change.</p> <p>I would also like to elaborate on the problem of relationships between the vision of climate crises presented by the scientists (for instance in consecutive Reports of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change <a href="https://www.ipcc.ch/">https://www.ipcc.ch/</a>) and the changing media discourse on climate crisis. However it was clearly stated in the first report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the crisis is caused by human activity and this diagnosis is reinforced in the following reports, in the media we can observe the growing trend of “giving the voice to the other side”(Boykoff M., Boykoff J.,2004)) combined with stronger and stronger “mediatization” of the scientific diagnoses of the state of the climate: scientific accounts , like all other media messages, are to meet the following criteria: novelty, controversy, geographic proximity and relevance to the reader (Carvalho 2007). The authority of science and scientists is becoming not convincing enough for the growing number of average media users.</p> <p>The goal of my presentation is also to enquire about the reasons of this situation. In my opinion the analysis of mechanisms of creation of networks of support, as presented in the Actor-Network Theory created by Bruno Latour (Latour, 2005)) can be useful in realizing this task. One of the tentative explanations could be that the networks created by scientists in reference to climate crises are not strong and developed enough.</p> <p>Another interesting inspiration in explaining this problem could be the contributions of intercultural communication: we can explore communication between scientists and members of the global society as communication between representatives of different cultures, using different languages and sharing different, also opposing values(Reyes-Galindo, Ribeiro Duarte).</p> <p>During my presentation I will elaborate on those explanations.</p>
	Bartłomiej Łódzki (University of Wroclaw)	<p><b><i>Crisis environmental communication during the war - a case study of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <p>The ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia has not only had devastating effects on human lives and infrastructure but also on the environment and natural resources (Anthes, 2022; Gallo-Cajiao et al., 2023; IUCN, 2022; Nuget, 2023). During the war, effective communication poses a challenge. President Zelensky responded to this challenge by frequently delivering</p>

speeches to his fellow citizens and the international community. These speeches aimed to keep everyone informed about the situation in Ukraine. Ukraine's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has also played a pivotal role in crisis environmental communication during this war (Kim, 2023). The Ukrainian Ministry consistently posted information about the environmental damage in Ukraine and throughout Europe (Cynk, 2022).

#### **Aim of the study**

The study examined the activities of the Ministry and analysed the articles published on the official website, which served as the main communication channel. The analysis focused on reviewing the dominant issues and problems discussed by the Ministry in the articles it published and examining the potential use of war propaganda in communicating environmental issues. Activities related to the use of new technologies for monitoring environmental damage and providing information and warning to the public about the risks and impact of damage have also been analysed.

#### **Data and methods**

The data collection for the study involved obtaining a sample of 429 articles published in the news section of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine's website (<https://mepr.gov.ua/>), spanning from February 24, 2022, to February 23, 2023 (stage I). The study utilised quantitative and qualitative content analysis, integrating text mining and natural language processing (NLP) techniques and manual QCA (Chen et al., 2013; Kasson et al., 2021; Koichi, 2004; López & Iva, 2018; Ylä-Anttila et al., 2022). The use of WordStat and MaxQDA software tools supported the analytical process (Guetterman & James, 2023; Sihidi et al., 2022).

Three research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What topics and issues dominated the thematic agenda of the Ministry of the Environment during the first year of the war?

RQ 2. Was war propaganda present in official messages about environmental issues?

RQ 3. What technologies and to what extent have been used to communicate environmental losses?

The first step of the analysis included automatic content analysis and automatic separation of thematic groups. The second stage consisted of a detailed, qualitative analysis of each thematic group. Additionally, the scope of use of the EcoZagroza application was determined using the SimilarWeb and Apptweak tools.

#### **Preliminary findings:**

Based on the automated and qualitative content analysis results, the themes identified in the research process are dominated by issues related to environmental threats and those affecting the economy.

There are also topics exposing the environmental consequences resulting from Russian aggression, the protection of nature reserves, or the pollution of the waters of the Black Sea. A significant place is given to information on environmental policies aimed at developing protection programmes, adaptation to EU standards, adoption of sustainable development principles and reconstruction of the environment after the end of hostilities.

Efforts of the Ministry in regulating and monitoring environmental issues, as outlined in legislation such as the Law of Ukraine "On the Basic Principles of the State Environmental Policy of Ukraine, the Law "On Environmental Impact Assessment," and the Law "On Strategic Environmental Assessment," have been crucial in addressing the environmental impacts of the war (Kalina et al., 2022).

There is no doubt that there are elements of war propaganda in the materials studied, but they are not dominant. They most often appear in the context of narratives about Russia's actions in Ukraine and the resulting threats to the environment.

		<p>However, much attention has been paid to communicating facts and proposing concrete solutions, mobilising audiences for specific actions, and presenting a future vision closely related to the green transition.</p> <p>An important aspect is the Ministry's proactive approach over time, which is not limited to publishing material but has been extended to organising events and meetings with journalists and taking action in the international arena. Among the Ministry's activities was the EcoZagroza app project, a reliable source of information on the state of the environment, which is particularly valuable in times of information warfare. The EcoZagroza project collects data on environmental threats caused by the Russian Federation and develops a plan for their further elimination. In the application, on the interactive map of Ukraine, every user can see data from monitoring systems regarding air quality, the level of radiation pollution throughout Ukraine, and facts about different environmental threats. The Ministry of Environment is also working on restoring ecological objects after the occupation. The project is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Digital Transformation with the support of the USAID/UK aid project 'Transparency and accountability in public administration and services/TAPAS' and the 'Apena2' project financed by the European Union (EcoZagroza, 2023).</p> <p>Although the presence of war propaganda is noticeable, most of the material published is reliable and credible data that focuses on presenting the impact of aggression on the environment and the destruction of infrastructure.</p> <p>Originality</p> <p>The presented study is part of a large research project by an interdisciplinary research team of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Wrocław. The team studies environmental communication in times of global threats (COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, which was treated as a global conflict). The behavior and forms of communication of selected political actors and scientists and international media content are examined. This study presents the forms of communication and the use of new technologies by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine.</p> <p>Keywords</p> <p>Environmental communication, Ukraine, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, war, NLP, content analysis, applications</p>
	<p>Otylia Bieniek (University of Wrocław)</p>	<p><b><i>Climate Change Communication in Russia under RuNet Conditions</i></b></p> <p><b>Study Purpose</b></p> <p>The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of RuNet on information flow and environmental activism in Russia. It seeks to explore the role of digital platforms, activism, and government responses in shaping environmental discourse and action within the country.</p> <p>Internet censorship in Russia escalated in late-February 2022 amidst the invasion of Ukraine, with Roskomnadzor orders and federal laws targeting foreign and independent media outlets, as well as social media platforms (Freedomhouse, 2022). This action resulted in the blocking of websites and the arrest of individuals, contributing to the removal or blocking of approximately 138,000 sites since the invasion began in February 2022 (The Barents Observer, 2022).</p> <p>Additionally, the study aims to understand the role of the nonprofit sector within the climate change discourse in Russian news media and how coverage differs between government and non-government sources. The nonprofit sector's pivotal role in addressing climate change has been extensively explored in academic literature. This study adopts the structural/functional definition of the nonprofit sector proposed by Salamon and Anheier (1992), encompassing characteristics such as formality,</p>

privacy, non-profit orientation, self-governance, and voluntarism. This inclusive definition encompasses NGOs and philanthropic organizations (Salamon and Anheier, 1992).

The nonprofit sector significantly influences climate change discourse through public-serving activities, such as knowledge dissemination, and political endeavors, including advocacy and mobilization (Bies et al., 2013). Research underscores the substantial involvement of local NGOs in disseminating knowledge and supporting climate change adaptation (McGregor, et al., 2018), while globally, NGOs have been effective in shaping environmental agendas and influencing news media and policy discussions (Hironaka, 2014) (Hanegraaff, 2015). Their impact is further amplified by their increased presence at UN summits (Ylä-Anttila and Swarnakar, 2017). An analysis of Russia's environmental communications during the COP summits will also be important in this context to understand the motivations behind its stance and its impact on international climate policy (BBC, 2023).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of the study is constructed around the distinct conditions brought about by the digital iron curtain and its impact on environmental communication and engagement in Russia. It also encompasses the viewpoints of environmental organizations, government policies, and the role of the nonprofit sector in shaping climate change discourse within the Russian news media landscape.

### **Research Questions**

What are the challenges and opportunities of environmental communication in Russia under RuNet conditions?

How does the digital iron curtain affect information flow and environmental activism in Russia?

What is the role of the nonprofit sector in shaping climate change discourse within Russian news media, and how does this coverage differ between government and non-government sources?

### **Methodological Detail**

The presentation utilizes a case study approach, focusing on Russia's legislative measures. The analysis examines Russia's climate doctrine, endorsed by Putin on October 26, 2023 (kremlin.ru, 2023), to illustrate the government's stance on climate change and its environmental response. This assessment offers valuable perspectives on the government's influence over environmental discussions and initiatives within the nation (Cooley, 2023). Additionally, a quantitative evaluation of Russian news articles from 2020 to 2023 was undertaken to investigate the non-profit sector's impact on shaping climate change discourse in Russian media (e.g. Rossiyskaya gazeta, Vesti, Argumenty i fakty, Nezavisimaya gazeta, Novaya gazeta, Meduza, Komsomolskaya pravda).

### **Preliminary/Final Findings:**

Russian media attention to the climate change issue has been low, with media outlets largely following the political agenda adopted by Russian political leadership (Yagodin, 2010).

The coverage of climate change is described as being within the realm of a paternalistic ethos, with a strong reliance on the protection of the state and subjects of power being predominant (Yagodin, 2010).

Since the adoption of the Climate Doctrine in 2009 and its current amendment in 2023, media attention on climate has increased. Russia is trying to promote the values of economic efficiency, global energy security, and the priority of national interests, which are in line with Russia's Climate Doctrine (Poberezhskaya, 2015).

		<p>Russia's climate change discourse is nationally specific, drawing on the self-understanding of the Russian elite concerning their geography, resources, and place in the world (Tynkkynen &amp; Tynkkynen, 2018).</p> <p>Existing studies do not look at the scope of coverage or apply a climate change discourse typology to determine topical focus, which limits the understanding of how Russian media structures the climate field (MeCCO).</p> <p>Russia's role within the global problem of climate change is significant, as it is one of the top five contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and a major exporter of fossil fuels (Martus, 2019).</p> <p>The Russian Federation's response to climate change has been deemed "critically insufficient" with little progress in climate action implementation in general (Climate Action Tracker, 2021).</p> <p>The nonprofit sector plays a crucial role in shaping climate change discourse in many global contexts, but its influence in Russian news media appears relatively limited (Schäfer and Schlichting, 2014).</p> <p>This presentation and study provide valuable insights into the challenges and dynamics of environmental communication within the regulated Russian internet environment, offering a non-Western perspective to the scholarship on climate change communications.</p>
	<p>Timothy Neff (University of Leicester)</p>	<p><b><i>Carbon capital and the interstitial field – Transnational climate governance processes through the lens of Bourdieu's field theory</i></b></p> <p>Pierre Bourdieu's field theory has proved useful for analysis of media production processes in multiple countries (Benson and Neveu, 2005; Benson, 2013; Benson et al., 2018; Eide &amp; Kunelius, 2010). Field theory recognizes that actors are neither helpless victims of social structure nor entirely free to choose how they navigate social worlds. Actors within a field are invested in the "game" that occurs within that field, an investment that Bourdieu calls "illusio" (Bourdieu, 1993, 1996; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This investment includes the embodiment of practices and perceptions that express the "nomos" or law of that field, its fundamental principle of production and reproduction. A field structures these actors' "habitus," or disposition, even as the field simultaneously is structured and transformed by these actors, who accrue and spend various forms of capital. The distribution of these capitals, in particular cultural and economic capital, structure a field, with dominant actors possessing more of one or more of these capitals.</p> <p>Field theory as developed by Bourdieu primarily takes as its focus social fields nested within nation-state contexts, and most research drawing upon field theory has similarly adopted a national context for its analysis (Benson and Neveu, 2005; Benson, 2013). To date, there has been limited development of field theory for research on fields spanning nation-states. Buchholz (2016) argues that field theory should not be rescaled but rather reimagined for application to transnational fields. In her research on global art fields, she finds a "vertical autonomy" that separates transnational flows of art and money from nation-state contexts. Christin (2016) examines efforts to establish collaboration between U.S. and French news outlets, which potentially could give rise to a transnational media field. However, national contexts reassert themselves in such efforts, and Christin finds that national journalistic cultures and language barriers ultimately frustrate the establishment of a transnational, U.S.-French field of journalism.</p> <p>Common to both of these approaches to transnationalizing Bourdieu is a vision of transnational fields as a singular entity, even as they rise above or establish links between fields at the nation-state level. This persistence of fields as more or less singular spaces accords in many ways with Bourdieu's argument that fields exist as relatively autonomous spheres, with their own principles of dividing the social world. For example, the literary field in late 19th-century France, which Bourdieu (1996)</p>



analyzes in *The Rules of Art*, is somewhat homogenous in that it is structured by an inverse relationship between cultural and economic capitals that grants prestige to authors with small, non-profitable audiences. The structuring effects of these capitals establish the literary field as a somewhat autonomous, singular space within France. Buchholz's global art field and Christin's U.S.-French journalism field have similar degrees of homogeneity and autonomy. That is, they are bound together by common values and practices even as actors within them seek to differentiate themselves from one another.

However, there is at least one more way to approach transnational fields: as social arenas formed by actors who simultaneously occupy positions within different, relatively autonomous fields at the nation-state level. I refer to such a field, if it exists, as "the interstitial field," as it is composed out of the interstices of multiple, heterogenous fields.

Climate governance processes, including those under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), offer one potential site to study and theorize interstitial fields. These processes display some of the characteristics that Bourdieu associates with fields, such as a form of relative autonomy, buy-in to the game, and a certain habitus or disposition learned by actors enmeshed in such processes. Hughes (2015) found similar field characteristics in her analysis of the scientific work that feeds into UNFCCC processes, and Kunelius and Eide (2012) have explored the "transnational journalistic field" that emerges during U.N. climate summits.

In this paper, I argue that one key to understanding the "illusio" that draws people from heterogenous social fields into participating in this interstitial field's "game" is a specific form of capital: carbon capital. This capital is accrued by actors through their possession of the means to increase or reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by human activities that consume fossil fuels, primarily oil, coal, and natural gas. By approaching the interstitial field of transnational climate governance as a social field structured by carbon capital it is possible to deepen our understanding of how actors, including media actors, navigate and vie to dominate negotiations and efforts to boost ambitions by these actors to mitigate and adapt to the GHG emissions that are rapidly warming our world. I argue that carbon capital grants climate governance – most obviously during annual UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties (COPs) that bring actors from very different social fields together to address climate change – an autonomous existence, institutionalized in its own rules and procedures yet occupied by many actors from different, nationally situated social fields who return to the space multiple times throughout the year.

The increasingly mediatized politics of this field are a particular focus of this study because journalistic accounts of climate governance processes express symbolic capital specific to the interstitial field. That is, who and what media focus on in their coverage is likely to reflect fundamental, field-specific struggles between dominant and dominated actors who possess unequal stocks of carbon capital. As a species of capital specific to the interstitial field of international climate negotiations, carbon capital can be converted into the symbolic power of "constituting the given through utterances" within that field (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170).

#### **Data and methods**

Data derive from ethnographic field work and my own participation at four COPs and one intersessional round of U.N. climate talks from 2018 through 2023. In this article I will couple first-hand experience with an analysis of a particularly acute example of carbon capital at work: the controversy over calls to "phase out" fossil fuels that erupted in the middle of COP 28, which took place in December 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (Carrington and Stockton, 2023). This method is based on Bourdieu's point that a field has "a specific gravity which it imposes" on all objects and agents within (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 17). In this case, the controversy can be seen as the imposition of the interstitial field's gravity on the utterances of

		<p>a COP Presidency possessing large stocks of carbon capital and converting this capital into the symbolic power of constituting a “given” vision of the world.</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>COP 28 President Sultan Al-Jaber’s comment that science does not support the need to completely phase out fossil fuels stands as a particularly stark yet seemingly contradictory conversion of carbon capital into symbolic power within the interstitial field of U.N. climate negotiations. The comment drew rebuke and, in some cases, support from actors occupying heterogenous fields but who also participate in the interstitial field of U.N. climate talks (Carbon Brief, 2023; Science Media Centre, 2023). The incident shows that this interstitial field, which has grown in three decades from 4,000 COP participants to more than 80,000 registered participants (Volcovici, 2023), has achieved an increasing degree of autonomy, to the point where its most powerful leader will acutely experience the imposition of the field’s gravity. Al-Jaber’s comments threatened to undermine the legitimacy of the social, economic, and political currency that exerts a fundamental structure on the field: carbon capital. If fossil fuels can continue to undergird the world’s energy systems long into the future, then carbon capital as the power to affect, to different degrees, levels of carbon emissions mitigation and fossil fuel consumption will be devalued, perhaps to the point where this interstitial field’s “nomos” itself is threatened.</p> <p>Yet it is because Al-Jaber can convert carbon capital into a dominant position in the interstitial field – occupying the COP 28 Presidency – that his utterances, which are exertions of symbolic power, attracted media coverage and galvanized debate within the field. Actors coming to this field from heterogenous social fields felt the structure and legitimacy of the field cast in doubt by a central, dominant actor. For example, U.S. climate scientist Michael Mann said the comments made “a complete mockery” of climate talks (Meredith, 2023).</p> <p>The concept of carbon capital thus has the analytical power to reveal what can and cannot be said, as well as which technologies and strategies addressing climate change find currency within U.N. climate talks. This perspective also holds value for those on the margins of the field, such as Indigenous Peoples and youth, who aim to achieve just and inclusive outcomes in U.N. climate talks. Occupying dominated positions in the interstitial field, possessing limited or highly constrained stocks of carbon capital, these actors must find alternative strategies, such as alliances, public demonstrations, and voting blocs, to garner media attention and shift the field’s gravity to their advantage.</p>
14:15-16.00	<p><b>1.10 Fighting for Order and Attention: Digital Public Sphere(s)</b>  <b>Chairs: Jakub Nowak, Gaia Casagrande</b></p> <p>Room 1.138</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Wanting Zhao (Nagoya University), Tatsuhiro Yamamoto (Nagoya University)</p>	<p><b><i>Internet Public Opinion and Mayoral Election of Nagoya City in 2021</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Political communication research is focusing much more on social media than in the past. The fact that anyone can easily reach out to social media to make their voice heard is unimaginable in the age of traditional media and thus scholars have high hopes for this new era of political communication symbolized by social media. When we entered this new era, it’s become clear that social media can fulfil some of our expectations, such as online political discussions, campaigns (McGregor, 2020),</p>

but it also brought us some concerns like political polarization, selective exposure, and echo chamber. Related studies of internet public opinion in the electoral arena have primarily addressed the issue of political homophily and heterophily (Colleoni et al., 2014; Guo et al., 2020) and the prediction of election outcome (Diaz et al., 2016; Pekar et al., 2022; Vepsäläinen et al., 2017). On one hand, Twitter (nowadays called as X) can show us higher levels of homophily in social networks, on the other hand, if we look at information diffusion on Twitter, we see lower homophily and a more public sphere-like scenario (Colleoni et al., 2014). The importance of examining both content and interaction has been reflected in the context of recent research (Guo et al., 2020). However, most of these studies are limited in national elections, few attentions have been given to local elections.

Especially in Japan, despite having one of the highest numbers of Twitter users in the world, there is comparatively scarce academia literature that studies social media in local elections, centered mainly around Osaka mayoral elections and gubernatorial elections. This is because the former Osaka prefectural governor/city mayor Toru Hashimoto is characterized as a populist politician (Ibaragi, 2001; Alima, 2012; Murakami, 2015; Ito, 2016; Ushiro, 2017; Matsutani, 2018; Zenkyo, 2021). In comparison to Osaka, however, research about Japan's other ordinance-designated cities elections is severely inadequate. Then we particularize and consider the case of Nagoya city, the 3rd largest one in terms of population, from a perspective of internet public opinion and election.

2021 Nagoya mayoral election has received considerable public attention than previous ones. This is related to the fact that the third-term incumbent of Nagoya, Takashi Kawamura who also has some traits of populist politician, has supported for the forged signatures for Aichi governor Hideaki Omura recall campaign in 2021. Despite entangled in this scandal, Kawamura defeated Toshiaki Yokoi, a former Nagoya city assembly member endorsed by the ruling coalition parties of Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito, the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and the Democratic Party for the People, and voluntary support from the Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party (THE ASAHI SHIMBUN, 2021.4.26). The margin between Kawamura and his rival has significantly narrowed down, compared with last election of 2017 (decreased from 38.7 % to 7.8 %). This sharp decline reveals the impact of the recall campaign against Omura as stated before. There are no surprises that this related information may have been spread on the Internet. In this context, this article studies internet public opinion about this special case, aiming at exploring three interrelated research question:

RQ1: What topics are social media users talking about in this election?

RQ2: How would internet public opinion react to this political scandal?

RQ3: What kind of users are influential in the social network analysis?

#### **Data and methods**

We collected 81,811 tweets that contain the keyword "名古屋市長選 (Nagoya mayoral election)", during January 1st to April 30th, 2021, with Twitter API. This collection consists of 63,890 retweets (78.1%), 16,770 original tweets (20.5%), 1,151 replies (1.4%). To understand what Twitter users are discussing about the election, morphological analysis and word co-occurrence network analysis were performed on the text of these tweets, and for data visualization we employed Gephi, which enables network analysis to be applied on this data.

#### **Analysis**

First, examining the political discourse on Twitter which corresponding to previous two research questions. In Figure 1, the main content of the internet public opinion on this topic are divided into five clusters based on modularity. Cluster A (percentage of cluster: 21.3%) represents the horse race, which regards a one-on-one battle between Kawamura and Yokoi

who is supported by the major parties. Mention of media source, for instance opinion polls by Yomiuri Shimbun (the top sales in Japanese newspapers) also appeared. Cluster B (32.7%) is pertinent to the incumbent's position. In addition to the recall incident, there were discussions about the voters supporting Kawamura every time, the position of his policy such as economic measures to overcome COVID-19 ("shopping," "return," "gift voucher," "pledge"), and his positions in this election race along with debates about the results of ballot counting. In cluster B, we can still witness the presence of mass media as major news resource, such as "Chunichi Shimbun (dominant local newspaper in Nagoya)," "web," and "Mainichi Shimbun (national newspaper)" as well as television stations "NHK" and "TBS news".

Cluster C (8.7%) shows the relationship of Governor Omura and Kawamura, which includes the posts criticizing Kawamura regarding the forged signatures recall incident and the content of the interview with Governor after his re-election. Similarly, cluster D (28.7%) also rounds the theme of the forged signatures recall incident, but there is a marked difference with cluster C. Besides the criticisms of Kawamura, it's also saturated with tweets that attacked mass media. On the left side of Figure 1, there are many assaultive words such as "anti-Japanese," "media," "information," "the weak," and "dirty", indicating that some netizens accused mass media of leading public opinion. These two networks show the reactions of netizens to the recall incident. Cluster E is the information about nationwide elections, which covers other elections in "Hokkaido," "Hiroshima," and "Nagano".

Then, as regards the third research question, we visualize the social network of retweets and replies in Figure 2, and list top 20 nodes to confirm major centrality indexes of social network analysis (see Table 1). In the same figure, mass media with high centrality, such as Chunichi Shimbun (@chunichi\_denhen), Mainichi Shimbun (@mainichi), and NHK News (@nhk\_news) are located on the left. Also, there are six prominent clusters in this figure; Cluster A (19.3%) is composed of many pro-Kawamura users, identified from the content of their tweets. Other media outlets such as Sankei News (@Sankei\_news), TBS News (@tbs\_news), and online media outlet Share News Japan (@sharenewsjapan1) also emerged. In cluster B (15.6%), there have many users criticizing the incumbent over the recall case. Interestingly, diverse actors appear such as celebrities, writers, news sites, and bloggers, indicating the high degree of attention paid to it.

Cluster C (12.8%) is similarly formed by users who had been keeping a close eye on the progress of this case. The difference from cluster B was the presence of accounts affiliated with Japanese Communist Party. Other political parties and their alliances were scarce in this network. Cluster D (6.2%), E (5.5%), and F (5.4%) outlining the spread of election news, represented by mass media and online media.

The following draws upon the top 20 nodes for centrality measures (Table 1). Centrality of Yokoi supporters and incumbent critics is higher than that of Kawamura supporters. To reflect the three centrality measures, users supporting the newcomer or bashing incumbent constitute the majority. Moreover, as previously mentioned, due to the recall case, the pro-Yokoi or incumbent criticism side included a very broad range of actors. Among them, the centrality of the disaster alert account (@UN\_NERV) and the Chunichi Shimbun were particularly high, ranking in the top 10 in three centrality measures. Yokoi's account (@yokoitshi) ranked 10th on the betweenness centrality, giving the impression that his campaign team outperformed the incumbent's campaign team in the online campaign.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigates internet public opinion of the 2021 Nagoya mayoral election, from three perspectives: political topics, reactions to political scandal, and influential users. While our analysis is limited to the Twitter text data type and the regional

		<p>cases, our research provides valuable insights into the relationships between internet public opinion and local elections, especially in the situation where a populist politician faces headwinds with unlawful suspicions in Japan.</p> <p>Answering RQ1 and RQ2, there is no doubt that the forged signature recall was the central topic, which had significantly impacted on internet public opinion, whereas we estimate major candidates didn't provoke full-fledge digital competitions of policy. These results indicate that emotional content tended to dominate internet public opinion.</p> <p>Corresponding to RQ3, the social network findings on Twitter show that traditional media is still the primary source of political information in Japan. Based on the content and social network analysis, it becomes evident that the prevailing emotions and feelings on social media leaned towards criticism of the incumbent due to the political scandal. It is possible that this content of criticism could influence voting behavior. Although this study doesn't clearly show the causalities of voting behavior, our contribution is a posteriori to catch and explain the drift of public opinion.</p>
	<p>Tim De Winkel (Hogeschool Utrecht, Erasmus University), Anne Kessels (Hogeschool Utrecht); Annette Klarenbeek (Hogeschool Utrecht); Laura Meijer (Hogeschool Utrecht)</p>	<p><b><i>An adequate response: Analysing discursive patterns in social media messages in moments of mobilization and issue formation</i></b></p> <p>Social media are increasingly important during crisis situations (Westerman et al., 2014; Saroj &amp; Sokumal, 2020). They are used by citizens to find and exchange information, express concerns, coordinate relief efforts, and eventually memorializing those affected (Takahashi et al., 2015). Furthermore, crises such as natural disasters often disrupt many forms of traditional communication and media. In these moments, new media - which are especially good in sharing first-hand and on the spot experiences - can serve as an important source of information (Saroj &amp; Sokumal, 2020). On the other hand, social media discussions may play a role in the escalation of an issue into a crisis event (van Dijk et al., 2013; Breuer, 2016). The potential of social media as a mobilization tool lies in its inherent and distinct properties and network functionalities. These reduce the cost of civic and political participation, provide very efficient means of spreading information among a network or population, and are also notably effective in motivating towards action (Enjolras et al., 2013). Institutions that deal with crisis management have started using social media as a tool. Governments, for example, use it for the dissemination of warnings, alerts, and status updates, as well as for the collection of ground information during crisis events (Saroj &amp; Sokumal, 2020). However, the problem of social media potentially mobilizing an online issue into a (offline) crisis has not been sufficiently addressed. Research finds that communication professionals of public institutions experience a hesitance to (re)act upon the forming of online issues and online mobilization (AUTHORS., 2018; AUTHORS., 2019; 2021). We argue that it is of great importance that communication professionals of public institutions are capable to respond adequately to ongoing issues (of crisis) on social media.</p> <p>In 2020, INSTITUTE obtained the GRANT NAME research grant by the INSTITUTE, to address the concerns of several organizational bodies within the Dutch government, regarding their experienced incapability to proactively recognize issue formation, and their consecutive hesitance to act. This started the research project called PROJECT NAME which was aimed at training communication professionals in effectively recognizing and navigating discursive practices associated with potential escalation of an issue into a crisis, and thereby help gain insight into discussions on social media and to recognize mobilization at an early stage. As such, we equipped organizations with the tools and knowledge needed to address the formation of issues online. We achieved this through the following steps; First we build a consortium of communication professionals from partnering public organisations: the Ministry of General Affairs, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Council of the Judiciary and the State Forestry</p>

Department. In collaboration with the partnering public organisations, we selected five case studies (later reduced to four) that were exemplar for the online issues our partnering organisations dealt with. Subsequently, through a discursive psychology analytical framework we would identify discursive practices employed by social media users during crisis, for each selected case studies (of crisis). Lastly, we have leveraged these results into a co-designed online learning environment - yielding a total of 18 real-world illustrations of discursive patterns -, where communication professionals can practice with real-world examples drawn from our research, to increase their sensitivity to patterns relevant for the prevention of escalation of issues. In this manner, the PROJECT NAME project equipped professionals with the essential tools and insights necessary to navigate and manage complex communication challenges on social media.

In this paper we follow up on PROJECT NAME, and complement our solution focussed and applied approach of the commissioned research project, with an academic follow-up focussed on the publication of empirical results, as well as general theory building. We will do this by interpreting the results of the research project acquired through the lens of discursive psychology - in addition to the results and feedback on the online learning environment that were gathered after the research project came to a conclusion -, through the theoretical frameworks of social media mobilization, online issue formation and mediatized crisis management, as well as datafied political communication in the platformized public sphere (AUTHOR, 2023). This leads to the following research question; What discursive patterns occur in social media messages that have the potential to mobilize audiences and/or lead to issues formation? And how do these insights into mobilizing discourse relate to our understanding of the role of the (social) medium as co-constructive of an online public?

In our research we employ discursive psychology in order to gain a more profound understanding of what happens during online conversations. The objective of discursive psychology is to analyse text and uncover how patterns in discourse construct our social world. Discursive psychology treats text and talk not merely as a neutral tool for description, but as a way to construct social realities (Potter, 1996). There are three analytical principles of the discursive psychological perspective; 1) next-turn proof procedure, i.e. how the formulation was treated by others, 2) rhetorical analysis, i.e. the effect of the chosen formulation in comparison to other potential formulations, and 3) semiotic analysis, i.e. the effect of variety in formulations which are indicative of their different interactional functions (Potter & Edwards, 2001). We have applied the analytical framework of discursive psychology to our social media case studies through the following methodological design; First, we collected social media messages during peak moments of online interaction for each case study by using a search string tailored to the specific case within the social media monitoring software of Obi4Wan, exported into datasets. Subsequently, we performed a discourse analysis on the datasets of social media interactions, basing ourselves on the aforementioned three analytical principles of the discursive psychological perspective, and marked text fragments/posts representing specific patterns. Results show that the plethora of spheres and fora we studied, include and represent a wide variety of rhetorical situations and discussants, including politicians, public officials, scientists, citizens and other members of the public. Additionally, through our methodological framework we were able to affirm that discursive patterns provide insight into how certain discursive devices contribute to rumour spreading and mobilisation on social media, which in turn can lead to issue formation. Our analyses identified two main patterns of online language use that can lead to issue formation – namely rumour formation and (potentially) mobilizing practices -, and within each pattern we distinguished three dominant subcategories: scenario construction (e.g. as escalating), identity construction (e.g. as a critic or as an activist), and group formation (e.g. authorities vs citizens). All six combinations of the discursive devices were employed in the online learning environment we

		<p>designed to train communication professionals to recognize online issue formation. Preliminary results on the usage of the environment by the organizations, showed that these organizations can translate the discursive devices into specific questions.</p> <p>Discursive psychology is a particularly suited method for the analysis of social media mobilization and issue forming discourse, due to its emphasis on talk as a central medium for constructing meaning and accomplishing social actions. It allows us to examine how certain discourses cut across the variety of events, forums and discussants, and uncovers shared norms of interaction, that orient to issue formation and mobilization. However, the focus on speech acts by the discursive psychology framework largely neglects, and therefore obfuscates, the (medium) specificity of the place where these acts occur, i.e. social media platforms. In our conference contributions we want to combine a focus on language and communication, with a focus on the medium itself. We do this by theorizing the empirical findings from our discursive psychology analyses, through the lens of media and platform studies. In doing so, we consider (online) conflicts as more than contentious events that can be analysed, but also as critical moments in which relations between the social and technical becomes visible (AUTHOR, 2023, pp. 17, 20). Therefore, the discursive analysis of issue formation and crisis communication also opens up the larger questions on the formation of issue publics, the deep mediatization of our public debate (Couldry &amp; Hepp, 2016; Hepp, 2019), and the platformization of our public sphere (van Dijck et al., 2018; AUTHOR, 2023). We are inspired by professor Noortje Marres assertion that issues are “important shared occasion for the critical inspection of previously unsuspected societal arrangements, assumptions, and states of affairs. And in a digital society this includes socio-technical arrangements for public accountability themselves” (Marres, 2021, pp. 13–14). In our paper, we explore these moments of crises and issue formation empirically and theoretically, as to further the understanding of the public sphere online.</p>
	<p>Ilona Dąbrowska (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin)</p>	<p><b><i>Deepfake technology as a disinformation tool for the Russian invasion of Ukraine</i></b></p> <p>The speech will address the problem of the rapid development and popularization, on a global scale, of deepfake technology in the context of its social and political implications. The paper is an attempt to answer the question about the goals and methods of using artificial intelligence (AI) in times of political crises, tensions and wars. The speech will address the problem of using images generated using artificial intelligence during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Based on a review of literature, reports and media coverage, examples of the use of deepfakes in Russian disinformation were highlighted and it was assessed how this technology was used and its importance in the context of propaganda 2.0. Russia's armed attack on Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, shocked public opinion, changed the perspective of contemporary leaders, and forced leaders and society to reflect on security.</p> <p>In addition to military actions, Russia has also launched a number of disinformation activities, including online. These activities fit into the concept of information warfare and propaganda 2.0. About how seriously they approach media 2.0, among others: terrorist organizations, may be evidenced by the release by the so-called Islamic State in 2016, a document titled: "Media Operative. You Are a Mujahid, Too", containing a set of recommendations regarding the active promotion of the idea of ISIS in the media, in particular on the Internet. One of the guiding ideas contained in this material is the message that the equipment necessary for every fighter is a gun (obviously) and a smartphone - to document the actions performed and disseminate them . Due to the activities carried out by Russia, the topic of disinformation has become extremely important for European societies . In Western research discourse, much attention has long been paid to the problem of Russian disinformation, which, as a tool of hybrid war, undermines the functioning and order of Western democratic systems .</p>

The disinformation is believed to be rooted in Russia's strategic history and culture . However, a novelty in the area of tools used for propaganda, manipulation and dis-information purposes today are audiovisual recordings made using deepfake technology.

This is a technology that allows you to generate videos with any message, using, for example, samples of a person's voice. Deepfake is most often used to combine images of human faces, and although it closely resembles an ordinary recording, it is generated by an algorithm. Thus, it becomes possible to create films presenting in a very realistic way events or statements that have never happened. As technology improves, films of this type have increasingly better images and sound, and therefore become more difficult to identify as fake materials. The intentionally destructive posting of deepfakes is nothing new. However, what is new is the use of this type of technology in the face of war. During the speech, I will refer to specific examples of the use of the technology in question during the Russian armed attack on Ukraine, and I will also present those that were generated by Russia in order to depreciate the image of President Volodymyr Zelensky or lower the morale of the Ukrainian army. Due to the freshness of the issue and the constant creation of new deepfake recordings, the final scale of threats and damage that may be caused by information manipulation using the technology in question is not yet known. Therefore, this issue should be examined, both in order to better understand the scale of the problem and to construct a plan to prevent and eliminate the negative effects of the popularization of deepfake technology.

The primary research goal of the work is to present the ways in which deepfake technology was used as part of Russian disinformation during the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. The indicated goal will be achieved by answering the following research questions: How did Russian disinformation using images generated by artificial intelligence take place? Also: What was the purpose of using AI-generated images in disinformation? The research used the case study method using content analysis, audio-visual analysis of multimedia materials and semiotic analysis. The analyzed research material includes nine film materials, two posts on social networking sites with artificially generated photos and three fictitious profiles on social networking sites. In order to answer the research questions, a review of scientific literature and official, analytical and media sources of information from March 2022 to October 2023 was conducted. Outlining and systematizing the use of artificial intelligence in Russian disinformation made it possible to create forecasts for the future use of the technology in question in disinformation activities.

Initial key findings allow us to conclude that several deepfakes created as part of Russian disinformation have appeared in the virtual space. However, due to the active actions of Ukrainian state bodies and services, as well as individual signals from journalists and activists, the disinformation potential of such messages has been minimized. In assessing the course of Russian disinformation in the analyzed period, it should be noted that the use of images generated by AI was not a frequent activity, but several significant cases were recorded, which may be a starting point for developing more dangerous forms of propagating manipulated visual messages generated using deepfake technology - more difficult to detection and greater destructive power. The escalation of the phenomenon will also be facilitated by the development of AI technology, which will translate into its easier, more accurate, faster and cheaper use. In the search for an answer to the second question about the purposes of using images generated by artificial intelligence as part of disinformation, it should be pointed out that the Russian Federation used the generated visual content most likely to spread information chaos in society, have a psychological impact on the morale of the Ukrainian military, and undermine trust in the state and government administration, discredit cooperation in the international arena, strengthen selected Russian narratives, as well as to test the opponent's reaction to the use of fabricated



		<p>images and infiltrate the information environment. We cannot forget that disinformation involves a continuous learning process - although the message may be ineffective, it is a lesson for the future, thanks to which disinformation activities can be optimized. Therefore, people and entities responsible for the development of AI tools that generate authentic-looking images should prepare their tools to appropriately mark the created materials and provide means that will enable their quick identification in the event of their unethical use.</p>
	<p>Andrew Prah (Nanyang Technological University)</p>	<p><b><i>Web3 and the Pseudonymous Public Sphere: Narratives of Disintermediation and Warranting On-Chain</i></b></p> <p>Web3 is a constellation of new technologies that has the potential to change communication online just as much as the previous Web 2.0 revolution. The notion of the public sphere is likely to be changed by Web3 technologies, as well. Specifically, Web3 technologies may address the crisis of identity, credibility, and information veracity which is reaching a tipping point with recent advances in AI. We first provide an overview of the technologies, then discuss identity in the digital public sphere. We turn to a content and narrative analysis of recent newspaper articles and X (Twitter) discourse regarding Web3. In doing so, we gain insight into what Web3 proponents, industry leaders, and critics say about the future. We argue that Web3 technologies will redefine the way we think about identity and veracity online via warranting on-chain, ultimately resulting in a new pseudonymous public sphere.</p> <p>Keywords: Web3, public sphere, warranting, blockchain, identity</p> <p>Web3 and the Pseudonymous Public Sphere: Narratives of Disintermediation and Warranting On-Chain</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Over two decades ago, Web Designer Darcy Dinucci coined the term “Web 2.0” in an article for Print Magazine (Dinucci, 1999). Titled “Fragmented Future,” the content seems obvious those who only read the headline. Surely the article must discuss the social fragmentation brought by Web 2.0: echo chambers, polarization, and the networked public sphere, etc.? But, Dinucci’s article wasn’t about social media at all, instead discussing the fragmentation of web publishing standards and the challenges it posed for designers; the social issues that seem so obvious today were largely unforeseen in 1999, these were the days of AOL Instant Messenger and IRC chatrooms, Facebook wouldn’t launch for another 5 years, Instagram was still a decade away. It serves as a stark reminder of how little we knew about the radical transformations that Web 2.0 would bring to communication and the public sphere.</p> <p>Today we find ourselves in a similar place with the web’s next technological shift. While not a newly coined term, talk of “Web3” is everywhere: from the pages of global newspapers to the whitepapers of blockchain technology start-ups. Parallel to this discussion of Web3 is the burgeoning discussion around artificial intelligence, spurred by the release of high-profile generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT). These AI technologies have exacerbated worries about bot accounts, misinformation, and identity theft that plague the current web. Thus, Web3 technologies are uniquely positioned to combat the crisis of identity and veracity which are sure to grow alongside AI technologies in coming decades.</p> <p><b>Web3</b></p> <p>The popularity spike of Web3 media discourse and online discussion led Collins’ dictionary to name one web3 technology, NFTs, as their 2021 “word of the year” (AP News, 2021). Despite this popularity, there has been little research into the changes Web3 technologies may bring to human communication, relationships, and the public sphere. This is problematic. Some of the first published work that predicted the effects of Web 2.0 originated from scholarly inquiry. Examples include fundamental assumptions of why people will form like-minded groups online (McPherson et al., 2001), and work that offers both pessimistic interpretations (i.e. the “law” of group polarization and “filter bubbles” (Pariser, 2011; Sunstein, 2002)), or</p>

optimistic interpretations such as the availability of social support for people with unique needs (Chung, 2014). An academic approach also prioritizes the identification of the underlying phenomena which will drive future effects – in other words it is not just about how or what happens, but why. Theory plays an especially important role in this regard. While the technology that underpins Web3 advances rapidly in the background, theory must also change such that it may underpin future communication inquiry.

The competing optimistic and pessimistic visions for Web3 provide fertile ground for narrative analysis, which goes beyond an inventory of stories to focus on how they are told (Smith, 2016). Therefore, our analysis takes this approach to investigate the implications of Web3 for the public sphere and communication theory through the frames, settings and values inherent in Web3 narratives. Throughout, we discuss implications for the public sphere(s) of the future, including the metaverse, decentralized autonomous organizations (DAO's), and digital marketplaces. We note that communication theories provide the ideal starting point for understanding Web3, with many of the supposed advantages of Web3 technology having been predicted decades ago by theories such as structuration, warranting, and social presence. We detail three narratives: the disintermediation of big tech, meta-identity in the metaverse, and warranting on-chain. We argue that these three narratives are part of a larger dominant narrative which redefines identity and communication and centres around a new pseudonymous public sphere.

#### **Web3 in Industry and Research**

Is blockchain and Web3 really the future or just a flash in the pan? Recent evidence suggests that smart money is on the former. Industry leaders have been using blockchain technology for years already and are constantly finding new use cases. Walmart, recognized as a global leader in supply chain management, has used blockchain to track food shipments from source to consumer since 2017; greatly expediting urgent food recalls when needed. Recently, Walmart transitioned invoice management to blockchain, reducing the proportion of disputed invoices to just 1% (from over 70% pre-blockchain) (Gagliardi, 2017; Vitasek et al., 2022). Thus, Web3 technologies are already part of everyday life. Furthermore, this presence is set to become even more explicit as the next generation of internet communities come online: metaverses. So intertwined is blockchain with the metaverse that a leading entrepreneurship magazine defines a metaverse as a “blockchain-based public platform” (Leos, 2022).

The inevitable expansion of Web3 has been noticed by a number of scholars. The metaverse in particular has attracted research on the implications for advertising (Ahn et al., 2022), embodiment (Saker & Frith, 2022), and the mechanics of corporate efforts to dominate future platforms (Egliston & Carter, 2022). As a subject of analysis, Web3 metaverses benefit from a long-line of research on digital worlds over the past two decades and preceding work on identity online. Web3 - cryptography and tokenization in particular - have clear implications for how we understand digital identity. In turn, Web3 may transform spaces in which identity is a central component, including online communities and the public sphere.

#### **Method**

Our study of Web3 narratives follows the content analysis approach outlined by Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, (2017) followed by narrative analysis (Smith, 2016). The study team first met to discuss the time period for research. We settle on the last 3 quarters of 2021 and first three of 2022 because this encompassed the height of Web3 optimism and media coverage (for example, Collin's dictionary announcement was released in Q4 2021), and the bursting of the cryptocurrency bubble that - given cryptocurrencies relation to Web3 - spawned negative narratives. We began content analysis of the gathered materials in August 2022 and continued our data collection through the end of Q1 next year (March 30, 2023).

To gather literature, we first conducted a search of global news media coverage of “Web3” using the Factiva database. To bring our results to a manageable size, we limited our search to the largest five English language newspapers by circulation, which included three newspapers from the United States, one from the United Kingdom and one from India. Then, we conducted a search of X (Twitter) from 2020 onwards for posts/threads regarding Web3 with high engagement (more than 10 replies) and extracted the entire discussion. We chose Twitter as it is the dominant social network used by industry leaders and critics.

**Narratives**

**The Disintermediation of Big Tech**

Decentralization means that the platform is owned by the users of it. Data is created, hosted, and verified on the blockchain. The users “owning” the platform may take the form of a defined group of individuals (e.g., DAO), or the platform may be open to the public. The mayor of Austin, Texas, quoted in USA Today said, “The neat thing about this technology is it’s decentralized and it has the capacity and the potential to be available to everybody.” And the structure of ownership changes as well as mentioned in a tweet, “Web2 = You are the customer. You lose money or data when you use the product; Web3= You are the owner. You own the product and win together.”

**Warranting On-Chain**

Over two decades ago, warranting theory predicted that users would trust information more if it was perceived as being difficult to forge (Walther & Parks, 2002). The more verifiable information that a persona online could provide that “warranted” a connection to a real person offline, the more the persona would be trusted. Web3 and blockchain present an interesting permutation: now an online persona can provide information about their identity that can be verified instantaneously by anyone because it is “on-chain.” One Twitter user in the music community speculates about music ownership, “DJ mixes could be on recorded on chain - each song in the mix being attributed to a creator, and royalties subsequently paid out whenever that mix gets plays.”

**The Pseudonymous Public Sphere**

Habermas (1991), referencing that the true notion of a public sphere is free from censorship, wrote that, “Laws of the market ... are suspended as were laws of the state” (p.36). In the modern online public sphere, large tech conglomerates pose the threat of censorship. We see that in Web3, blockchain technology may allow for the “middle-men” tech companies to be removed. In turn, censorship threats may be removed as well. But, who owns and maintains the digital town squares of the Web3 world? The answer, quite simply, is the users themselves. With the ability to verify personhood and credentials, a user becomes a lucrative target for advertisers. Armed with unthinkable amounts of data, corporations have been the main beneficiaries of advertising on the web – but this may change in the Web3 future. If personal data is to be tokenized and owned by users themselves, they can be the one reaping the benefits. We contend that the verifiable, decentralized nature of the blockchain gives these warrants that lie on chain much higher warranting value than we are accustomed to in Web 2.0, where nearly every warrant is passed through a middleman company and thus subject to censure or modification. We describe the result as the pseudonymous public sphere. Web3 technology restores the resource of identity via warranting on chain. How the pseudonymous public sphere plays out exactly like this remains to be seen, but we can have hope that if current visions are realized, tomorrow’s digital public sphere is a vibrant place.

16.30-18.15	<b>1.11 Media Performance in Times of War</b> <b>Chairs: Dorota Piontek, Bartłomiej Biskup</b>  Room 1.120	<b>Abstract</b>
	María Fernanda Novoa Jaso (University of Navarra); Aurken Sierra Iso (University of Navarra)	<p><b><i>The war in Ukraine across Europe: news coverage and audience perceptions</i></b></p> <p>Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shell-shocked the world. It has monopolized headlines in the print and broadcast media, unleashed a torrent of instant analysis in professional commentary, and flooded social media (Ciuriak, 2022). The study of this conflict from the perspective of the media and audiences is a field of research to be explored.</p> <p><b>Russia-Ukraine tensions through the media</b></p> <p>Different research on the conflict reflects on the role of the media in its international dissemination. Watanabe (2017) conducts a longitudinal content analysis of ITAR-TASS and Interfax published news, and detects the emergence of a new approach in Russia's propaganda strategy. Again, looking specifically at Russia, in her analysis of the ongoing Ukraine conflict before 2020, McGlynn (2020) presents evidence that the Russian state media tended to offer patriotic models for emulation, appropriating cultural memory and national identity. Regarding the current conflict, Ptaszek, Yuskiv, and Khomych (2023) use text mining to study the verbal framing of the conflict in the news published on Telegram channels by the Russian news agency RIA Novosti (RIAN) and the Ukrainian news agency (UNIAN) during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. While the Kremlin news framed military actions and economic sanctions, the Ukrainian agency shows more flexibility in its framing with a focus on moral issues.</p> <p>For example, Boyd-Barrett (2015) assesses the events that took place in Crimea, Odessa, and eastern Ukraine in various global and "alternative" media sources between February and October 2014 and identifies 10 narratives that, in his view, constitute "information warfare". Ojala et al. (2016) analyse the visual coverage of tensions in Ukraine in representatives of the international press (The Guardian, Die Welt, Dagens Nyheter, and Helsingin Sanomat) and show the presence there of three ways of framing the conflict in Ukraine: as a national power struggle, as Russian intervention and as a geopolitical conflict. Nygren et al. (2018) also compare the reporting on the ongoing Ukraine conflict, covering the mainstream media in Ukraine, Russia, Poland, and Sweden through in-depth interviews with journalists, and find differences in journalistic routines and features of self-censorship or activism in the media. Lichtenstein et al. (2019) analyse the presentation of the conflict through talk show debates in Russian and German television, finding considerable differences in the frames used. Liu (2022) expands upon the methodology proposed by Godefroidt et al. (2016) to investigate the way the Ukraine Maidan crisis of 2013-2014 was represented in three UK and three Russian media outlets. In a later paper, Liu (2023) discusses soft power, ideological position and media funding in the presentation of international events, focusing on the news framing of the 2014-2015 Ukraine conflict by the BBC and RT. This research suggests that RT applied humanitarianism to set the news agenda while the BBC used relatively less human rights framing but positioned Russia as responsible for the conflict.</p> <p><b>Method</b></p> <p>This research aims to analyse how news stories shape public opinion about the Ukrainian War in Europe. Through a quantitative methodology, we explore the relevance of the war in Ukraine for audiences in eight European countries. In</p>

addition, we examined the news coverage during the first month of the conflict by Euronews (online channel) (from February 24 to March 24, 2022).

### **Data**

We use data from the Digital News Report survey (Newman et al., 2023), a large-scale study focused on news consumption and attitudes toward news, conducted annually by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and fielded by YouGov. The total sample (N=16490) integrates news consumers from eight countries from Northern Europe (Denmark, UK); Western Europe (France, Germany); Southern Europe (Italy, Spain), and Eastern Europe (Poland, Slovakia). A cross-country (statistical) comparison is made to identify the level of importance that audiences attach to the war compared to other topics, whether this is attributed to "false or misleading information" or if it is a topic they want to avoid.

This research will be complemented by a content analysis that explores all the news published by Euronews during the first month of the conflict. To do so, we use an analysis code that identifies frames, sources, and the main dominant social actors. With this, we hope to advance our understanding of European audiences and identify dominant frames of war information. In order to accomplish the research objectives, we developed a code scheme to ensure the coherence and rigour of the content analysis. This code encompasses the following variables and categories:

Dominant frame: the frame in which the information is presented corresponds to the following options

War or conflict frame (description of military actions, progress in the conflict, troop movements, war strategies, etc.).

Diplomatic frame (international response of countries; speeches and political statements of international leaders, etc...).

Economic and technological framing (allusion to the costs of the conflict: gas, inflation, company closures; monetary impact of the conflict on different countries, etc...).

Human interest frame (information focuses on victims, civilians, refugees, humanitarian aid, consequences of the conflict on families or other aspects of human interest).

Attribution of responsibilities. In order to understand the angle of the conflict in more detail, we focused on five possible categories that could be present in the news coverage:

Ukraine as aggressor/ Russia as victim (Ukraine as a promoter of the conflict).

Russia as aggressor/ Ukraine as victim (explicit mention of the Russian attacks on Ukraine).

The West (United States and Europe) as Ukraine's ally (references to the West's organisation of support for Ukraine: through economic sanctions on Russia or sending arms to Ukraine).

Neutral position (no clear attribution of responsibilities is observed and the news is descriptive).

Social actors. The data collection process involved capturing the presence or absence of various political, national, institutional, or civil actors within the headlines:

- Nations in the headlines: Ukraine, Russia, China, other BRICS countries (Brazil, India or South Africa), European Union, G7 countries (the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, China were distinguished and the category "other countries" was integrated for those that counted less frequently).

- Institutions: a distinction was made between "general purpose organisations" (e.g. UN, UN); "military or security cooperation organisations" (NATO and the European Union); "economic cooperation organisations" (International Monetary Fund, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development); "social, cultural and humanitarian cooperation organisations" (ILO, UNESCO, World Health Organisation); "organisations designed to channel the cooperation of states" (post, telecommunications, maritime, air and rail communications, scientific activity).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political leaders: mentions of Vladimir Putin, Volodymyr Zelensky, European Union political leaders and non-European political leaders.</li> <li>- Allusion to civilians or victims of the conflict on both sides of the conflict</li> </ul>
	<p>Agnieszka Szymańska (Jagiellonian University)</p>	<p><b><i>Media on War in Ukraine – credibility and objectivity of media coverage from the perspective of Polish journalists</i></b></p> <p>War is a time of significantly increased demand for information and at the same time difficult access to reliable, verified and objective information. For ordinary users and global public opinion in general, the media is the basic source of information about the war's course and causes. In this situation, it is relevant to determine how journalists themselves assess the credibility and objectivity of the media coverage. This topic will be presented from the perspective of Polish war correspondents and journalists covering the war in Ukraine based on the results of in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted after the first period of the conflict in May 2022.</p> <p>The research covered two stages. First, a qualitative analysis of media coverage of the war in Ukraine in selected Polish media during the first month of the war was carried out. The group of surveyed media included information portals (onet.pl, interia.pl, wp.pl), commercial and public radio (Radio Kraków, Radio RMF) and TV stations (TVP1, TVN), as well as nationwide and local daily press (Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita, Nasz Dziennik, Fakt, Dziennik Polski, Gazeta Krakowska) and weeklies (Newsweek, Polityka, Wprost, Tygodnik Powszechny, Do Rzeczy, W Sieci, Gazeta Polska). This stage of research was used to identify the climate of the Polish media discourse on the war in Ukraine and to select journalists who were the authors of the coverage. The second stage of the research consisted of in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted with Polish journalists. The group of respondents included publishers (2), journalists working in editorial offices in the country (4) and war correspondents (3). Altogether, 9 interviews were conducted.</p> <p>The interviews took the form of semi-structured interviews. The Interview guide/guideline used in the research was composed of 12 questions in total. The paper analyses and presents selected answers that refer to the objectivity and credibility of the media in the way of reporting on an ongoing conflict.</p> <p>The obtained results indicate that maintaining objectivity in reporting on this conflict is particularly difficult. Journalists are aware of their own bias and their limitations in maintaining objectivity in reporting on this war. In this context, they point to several reasons, among which, in addition to the classic communication barriers typical of war situations, they also mention the proximity of the place of events and the convergence of historical experiences with the attacked side. The most interesting results concern the strategies that journalists adopt to deal with their own bias.</p>
	<p>Agnieszka Stępińska (Adam Mickiewicz University)</p>	<p><b><i>Information and mis/disinformation flow on the war in Ukraine: Polish citizens' perceptions and evaluations of the media performance</i></b></p> <p>The goal of this exploratory study is two-fold. First, we aim to provide a characteristics of the context in which information (and mis/disinformation) on the war in Ukraine has been spread in Poland. Specifically, we examine media-related factors such as the media use habits (main sources of political information; selective news exposure) and level of trust in media, as well as politics-related factors, that is political interest, satisfaction with democracy and trust in government. Additionally, we focus on concerns about the war in Ukraine among the Poles. Taking into consideration a geographical proximity, past experience, current relations with Russia and Ukraine, and consequences of the war, Poland makes an interesting case for a study on the media performance in time of this international conflict.</p> <p>Therefore, the second aim of the study is to map Polish media users' perceptions and evaluations of the information (and mis/disinformation) flow on the war in Ukraine. In particular, we examine the Polish media users' news consumption,</p>

		<p>evaluation of the media performance on covering war in Ukraine, sources and causes of false information on war in Ukraine in the media, and attitudes towards fact-checking.</p> <p>In this study we define misinformation as an information that is factually inaccurate without the intention to cause harm or deceive recipients (Kim &amp; Gil de Zúñiga, 2021). In particular, it can be any form of information that is unintentionally false (Wardle, 2017), or information that is not based on relevant expert knowledge or empirical evidence (Vraga &amp; Bode, 2020). Disinformation, on the other hand, is regarded to be intentionally harmful or deceptive information based on deliberate acts of doctoring, manipulation, or fabrication (see: Freelon &amp; Wells, 2020; Hancock &amp; Bailenson, 2021). In our study we will examine to what extent Polish media users perceive a presence of false information in the media as either intentional or unintentional. In the former case, we will also trace which sources Polish citizens associated with the dissemination of perceived false information surrounding the war.</p> <p>For the purpose of this study we use a survey data collected in April-May 2022 under the framework of the project that was launched and coordinated by the Network of European Political Communication Scholars. Data collection was conducted by the international research company Kantar, who translated the original English language survey into 19 country-specific versions, including the Polish one. The translation was carefully checked by native speakers (members of the project). The final number of completes used in the analyses of the Polish data was 1004.</p> <p>For the purpose of this study we use descriptive mean score analyses and percentages to illustrate the opinions, evaluations, and salience of perceptions. The preliminary findings on the media context showed that television is still the most important source of political information for the Polish citizens. It was followed by radio and newspapers and magazines (the device through which respondents got the media or platform did not matter; for newspapers and magazines both traditional and digital/website versions counted). At the same time as many as 44% of the respondents either completely agreed or agreed that there was a lot of false information in the news media (low trust in the media). More than 22% of respondents claimed that they avoid information that is not in line with their views (selective news exposure). As many as 65% of the participants of the study claimed that they were interested in politics. Still, a level of satisfaction with democracy was moderate low (M=3.40, SD=1.84, a scale 1-7), and trust in government was even lower (M=3.06, SD=1.91, a sale 1-7). The war in Ukraine was perceived mostly as an important global issue (55% of respondents completely agreed with such a statement) and an important issue for Poland (42%, accordingly).</p> <p>There was also a predominant perception that false information has been spreading mostly by Russian sources (President Vladimir Putin, Russian government, and established media in Russia). Furthermore, spreading false information was mostly seen as intentional activity performed to hide reality from the people, to disrupt the societal order, or due to strategic aims of political actors.</p> <p>As for the evaluations of the Polish media performance and the attitudes towards fact-checking, the picture was more complex.</p>
	Agnieszka Całek (Jagiellonian University)	<p><b><i>Where are the sources of news? The second-hand information: the migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border from August 2021 to February 2022</i></b></p> <p>The migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border started in August 2021. It was part of the political action planned by Alexandr Lukashenka to destabilize the situation on the eastern border of the European Union. The Belarusian regime sent to EU borders hundreds of people (refugees and migrants) from the Middle East and North Africa (mainly). They came legally to Minsk, close to the EU green border. Regime promised them easy crossing the border. In Poland, the crisis started in the</p>

little village of Usnarz Górny, where a group of illegal migrants became locked between the Polish and Belarusian border guards without permission to enter any country. Firstly, The Polish Border Guard, NGOs' activists, and even local residents were trying to help people in a trap. They delivered clothes, food and water, drugs, and medical services. When a critical situation lasted longer and longer, Polish political authorities decided to stop allowing to help migrants anyone. When the media showed this situation, it had a negative influence on the government and, finally, on Poland's international image. After that, Polish authorities decided to limit access to the border area. President Andrzej Duda issued a regulation introducing a 30-day state of emergency in parts of the Podlaskie and Lublin voivodeships (2 September 2021). It meant that no one unauthorized could come closer than 3 kilometres to the border, including journalists and other media workers. Media became hostages of this situation; without access to the border and especially to the migrants, journalists and media workers had to use indirect sources from the second hand, mainly from NGOs activists who decided to help people in need in the border area and from The Polish Border Guard, who are institutional services and who was there legally on duty. One of the most important communication channels during this time was Twitter (X), where both NGOs and The Polish Border Guard informed about the situation.

This presentation will show how The Polish Border Guard communicate on their official Twitter channel and how "Border" Group (Grupa Granica – the NGO founded in September 2021) informs there about migrants' situations. I did comparative content analysis (with the use of a few auxiliary research techniques).

**Mein research questions:**

- How do The Polish Border Guard keep the public informed about the situation at the border?
- How does the "Border" Group keep the public informed about the border situation?
- Where are the similarities?
- Where are the differences?
- What kind of visualisation uses The Polish Border Guard and "Border" Group?
- How do The Polish Border Guard and "Border Group" describe situations textually?
- Which media used information from The Polish Border Guard and "Border" Group?
- How did the media use information from The Polish Border Guard and "Border" Group?

**Methodology and research procedure**

This research has two levels. The first level focuses on Twitter/X channels (The Polish Border Guard and "Border Group"). The research material contained all tweets from September 1, 2021, to February 24, 2022. Each day, content has been compared on two accounts. The visual and textual components of the tweet were analysed. The main categories in content analysis are: topic, connection with situation on the Polish-Belarusian border, language (sentiment), citation, comments, perspectives, context, links, emojis and icons, location and marking, visualisation (form, composition, semiotics, connection with text). This level was realised with the MAXQDA program. Eventually, I analysed several hundred tweets.

The second level focuses on using the analysed Twitter channels as sources of news for new media. The impact of this content has been checked with the support of Google News. This tool allows researcher to select information day by day and select news with key words (combination "Straż Graniczna" + "Twitter" and "Grupa Granica" + "Twitter"). This made it possible to check which media used information from the examined sources. MAXQDA was also used in this section of the research. The main categories in content analysis are: context of information, quotations or embeddings, sentiment, and the presence of a second analysed account. Eventually, I analysed c.a. 400 internet publications in professional media.



		<p><b>General conclusions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Polish Border Guard and “Border” Group inform about the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border in an extremely different way.</li> <li>• The Polish Border Guard informs about migrants in the context of security threats, but it is not the main topic; there are many other tweets about guards different work. Visualisation concerns guards and their work.</li> <li>• “Border” Group informs almost only about migrants in need and their situation. Other topics are very rare. The visualisation concentrates on migrants and refugees from a humanistic perspective.</li> <li>• Similarities in communication between both groups are very rare.</li> <li>• Media use mainly The Polish Border Guard content on Twitter, “Border” Group more rarely. Quotations and embedding are more often than paraphrasing.</li> <li>• Using analysed channels as the source of information is related to the ideological bias of the media. Left-wing media more often use “Border” Group content.</li> </ul>
	<p>Migle Bareikyte (European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)); Mykola Makhortykh (University of Bern)</p>	<p><b><i>From arrested to digitally witnessable war: How Russia's war in Ukraine is documented, narrated, and critiqued on Telegram</i></b></p> <p>Digitalisation, datafication and platformisation has transformed how catastrophic events, including wars, pandemics, and natural disasters are witnessed and researched. The concept of witnessing has long been used in law (Peters, 2001; Gill &amp; Hynes, 2020), critical studies (Husanovic, 2009), and memory studies (Hirsch &amp; Spitzer, 2009) to explore embodied perceptions and representations of societally significant and traumatic events. However, today the practice of witnessing, in particular regarding war, is “being sharply redrawn by digital media” (Allan, 2013, p. 118) and increasingly becoming the focus of communication and media research (e.g. Chouliaraki 2009, 2015; Pötzsch, 2015; Pennington, 2020; Henig &amp; Ebbrecht-Hartmann, 2022). Digital platforms such as Telegram, Twitter, and TikTok enable new possibilities for documenting, communicating, and investigating wars (Kayyali, 2022; Nazaruk, 2022) but also for distributing false witness testimonies (Khaldarova &amp; Pantti, 2020) misleading the public, reiterating hate speech and aggravating hostilities. Together with the rise of new non-human witnesses ranging from military drones recording the ongoing violence (Rupka &amp; Baggiani, 2018) or chatbots generating narratives about collective suffering (Makhortykh et al., 2023), these transformations are shifting the boundaries between the immediate eyewitnesses of catastrophes and global audiences, creating new bottom-up forms of war-related (political) communication that also involve new conceptual, empirical and ethical challenges for studying it in data-driven media ecosystems (Hoskins &amp; O'Loughlin, 2010).</p> <p>In our paper, we examine some of these challenges regarding the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine and how it is witnessed on Telegram. Becoming one of key media in Ukraine following the large-scale 2022 invasion, Telegram—similar to other social media platforms and messengers (Ford &amp; Hoskins, 2022)—is used to share various war-related content and its diverse interpretations. These processes contrast the “arrested war” argument that traditional media, state, and military institutions have largely appropriated contemporary war witnessing and meaning-making in the digital sphere (Hoskins &amp; O'Loughlin, 2015). We argue that the non-institutionalized forms of digital war witnessing on Telegram in the form of documenting, sharing, and communicating information about the Russian aggression challenge relations of power underlying the arrested war media ecosystem. We do not idealise this form of witnessing as emancipatory or democratic; it can still be elite-centred and structured by the proprietary platform architectures - but we call for recognizing it as another form of witnessing the war in online environments that is different from witnessing practices associated with traditional institutions. To account for</p>

this distinctiveness, we propose the concept of digitally witnessable war informed both by the recent works on witnessing in online environments (e.g. Chouliaraki, 2015; Awan, 2016; Ford & Hoskins, 2022) and our empirical research on the platformisation of witnessing the Russia's war in Ukraine.

To examine how the concept of digitally witnessable war can inform research on non-institutionalized forms of platform-based witnessing, we use a case study focused on Telegram-based digital war witnessing practices. We systematically examine how members of a popular Telegram channel associated with a large city in the eastern part of Ukraine occupied by Russia since 2022 (the name of the city is not included due to the sensitive nature of the data) discuss their experiences of war and occupation. Specifically, we ask the following research questions: what non-institutionalised communicative practices arise on Telegram in relation to the war and how are they different from institutionalised practices of documenting and representing the war-time violence investigated in existing research? How do the Telegram communicative practices change over time and certain aspects of these practices remain more stable than the other ones? Also, how do these practices influence the mediatisation of war in Ukraine, and what are the implications of such mediatisation for digital witnessing?

The data for our research is acquired through the collaboration with the Ukraine-based Telegram Archive and the TG Search group. The Telegram Archive was founded in March 2022 at the Lviv Center for Urban History with an aim to document and archive Ukrainian chats on Telegram discussing the ongoing war (Shumylovyh et al., 2022). To preserve information about a broad range of institutionalised and non-institutionalised communication practices on Telegram, including data which can be removed or changed in the long term (e.g. due to self-censorship), the Centre has been manually exporting Telegram archives for more than a year. The archived chats were qualitatively selected, curated, and described using custom-made metadata. Additionally, the archive has been integrated with the TG Search tool developed by the Kyiv-based information technology company to enable data access in a research-friendly manner.

To address our research questions, we have empirically and systematically examined the data set consisting of 2,297 Telegram messages from one specific city chat collected for three individual days of the war. We chose dates from March, July, and October 2022 to examine how witnessing practices change over time and how they vary between the periods of intense violence (e.g. the siege of the city) and the subsequent occupation. In terms of selecting specific dates, we aimed to select dates which were not characterised by any major events which could have dramatically changed the dynamics of everyday witnessing of war which we were particularly interested in.

To analyse data, we combined qualitative content analysis, close reading, and descriptive statistics. We developed categories for qualitative content analysis inductively to identify different forms of communicative practices on Telegram based on our reading of their functionality and then applied them to code the dataset. The coding was non-exclusive, so the same message could belong to multiple categories. The following categories of practices based on their functionalities were included in the codebook: chat communication, spatial attribution, critique, expression of emotion, filler, searching for information, and making narratives. The coding was conducted by the two coders who independently coded the whole dataset and then consensus-coded the occasional disagreements. After completing the coding, we used descriptive statistics to examine the distribution of the message categories over the three time periods we examined. Finally, we used close reading to conduct a more in-depth examination of specific messages to trace in more detail changes in witnessing practices over time.

Our preliminary findings, which we will refine for the conference, point towards a substantial shift in the witnessing practices on Telegram. During the period of intense violence, we observed the prevalence of messages documenting the damage to the city infrastructure, formalising practices of communication (e.g. what is allowed to post about and what is not) and

		<p>searching for information about relatives and close ones. In the later periods corresponding to the Russian occupation, we observe emergence of diverse forms of critique, the politicisation of communication practices, and the formalisation of war narratives.</p> <p>Our study showcases that war witnessing is not limited to the global news audience that is demanding new experiences from first-hand witnesses to satisfy their information needs in the current attention economies (Allan, 2013). Instead, in the time of digitally witnessable war, direct and active witnesses, such as people from Russia-occupied Ukrainian cities, demand new experiences from other direct witnesses, utilising digital platforms and messengers. These new forms of interactive and polyvocal less-institutionalised witnessing creates a way to resist the occupying forces in a bottom-up manner by documenting the violence and sharing potentially life saving information with one's peers. At the same time, it is important to recognise that these witnessing practices do change over the course of time that can lead to their politicisation and the subsequent polarisation of (online) communication which is increasingly used for blame attribution. We maintain that such a relational, interactive form of witnessing, the multiplication and diversification of witnesses, and the shifting dynamics between witnesses and audiences, can also be re-appropriated by traditional media and state institutions (as in the “arrested war” argument by Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2015)). However, as seen in Telegram chats, it also can serve the witnessing individuals who can be empowered in terms of new possibilities for sharing and negotiating their experiences.</p> <p>We acknowledge that these communicative practices can be subverted, distorted and used by propaganda to incite more violence between specific communities, or instrumentalised for other purposes. This is why we argue that the understanding of what forms of digital witnessing emerge on the platforms and messengers at the time of war is important for conceptualising their role and potential risks they pose, which also has implications for platform regulation as well as for further usage of platform data, including generative AI training models.</p>
16.30-18.15	<p><b>1.12 Media &amp; Health Communication (II)*</b>  <b>Chairs: Agnieszka Hess, Magdalena Hodalska</b></p> <p>Room 1.128</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Karolina Brylska (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>How to effectively promote COVID-19 vaccination on social media if you are a doctor? Final results of an experimental study using surveys, eye tracking, and face tracking measurements</i></b></p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly emphasized the critical role of public trust in science. On social media, a significant conflict arises between the dissemination of misinformation by vaccination opponents and the efforts of physicians and scientists engaged in online educational activities. They aim to elucidate the importance of vaccination in combating the pandemic. This dynamic underscores the pivotal role played by expert-generated content on social media in the frontline battle against the pandemic. To effectively contribute to this fight, these messages must be thoughtfully crafted—being not only persuasive but also comprehensible and appealing to the audience (Lerner &amp; Keltner, 2001; Tannenbaum et al., 2015; Ness et al., 2017; Heffner et al., 2020; Jordan et al., 2020; Ojala, 2012; Toma &amp; D’Angelo, 2015; Sundar &amp; Nass, 2001; Borah &amp; Xiao, 2018; Poorisat et al., 2019; Kareklas, Muehling &amp; Weber, 2015; Thon &amp; Jukcs, 2017; Wang et al., 2008).</p> <p>It has to be underlined that most research on the persuasiveness of health messages is conducted using declarative methods. Biometric measurements are sometimes employed in social campaign studies, but so far, they have not been used in research</p>

on COVID-19 pandemic-related communications or expert posts on social media (a query did not reveal such publications). While the issue of sender credibility is widely recognized (Petty & Cacioppo 1986, Chaiken & Maheswaran 1994, Pornpitakpan 2004), findings in this area will also be considered in the project. The persuasiveness of vaccination-related messages is primarily analyzed in the context of framing (gain- vs loss-frame). Review analyses have shown no statistically significant difference in the persuasiveness of these forms (O'Keefe & Nan 2012, O'Keefe & Jensen 2007). However, framing itself is somewhat significant for message effectiveness, but only in conjunction with additional moderators, such as situational factors or individual differences (Pența & Băban 2018), including health literacy (Lorini et al. 2018). Meta-analyses addressing the relationship between health literacy and vaccine attitudes indicate discrepancies in study results, the complexity of the issue, and a combination of factors contributing to effective communication, including the specific context of communication (Jarrett et al. 2015).

The topic of vaccine hesitancy in the context of COVID-19 and social media has already been a subject of research. A clear association has been established between social media activity and attitudes toward vaccination, as well as the overall impact of the pandemic on media consumption and political polarization (Van Aelst et al., 2021; Mihelj, Kondor, Štětka, 2022; Mellado et al., 2021). Additionally, ongoing analyses are examining the relationship between exposure to social media and belief in conspiracy theories (Theocharis et al., 2021). The connection between trust in experts and media during a global crisis is also continuously under scrutiny (Mihelj, Kondor, Štětka, 2022).

This presentation will specifically delve into the final findings of a project assessing the effectiveness of social media posts by medical experts in encouraging COVID-19 vaccination. The project was conducted under the "New Ideas" grant (no. 622-62/2021), funded by the University of Warsaw. The presentation will aim to illustrate how messages from healthcare professionals on social media are perceived by both proponents and opponents of COVID-19 vaccinations in Poland.

The following RQs were asked in the project:

- RQ1. How - in terms of form and content - are the physicians' messages on vaccination against COVID-19 in social media structured?
- RQ2. What are the types of messages regarding vaccination against COVID-19 published by physicians on social media?
- RQ3. What type of expert announcements is persuasive for those sceptical about COVID-19 vaccination?

Based on that questions, the following main hypothesis was set:

H1: There is a type of message (independent variable) by a medical expert that is more effective than other types in persuading people to vaccinate against COVID-19 (dependent variable) who are sceptical about these vaccinations.

The study was carried out on three experimental groups and a control group (approx. 30 persons each), composed of students of social studies and humanities, divided according to their attitudes towards COVID-19 vaccination: (1) unvaccinated, (2) sceptical about vaccinations to some extent, but vaccinated, (3) enthusiastic about vaccinations and fully vaccinated.

The project was implemented in three stages:

1. Mapping experts (physicians) active in SM and aggregating their posts on vaccinations.
2. Analysis and typology of posts in terms of content and form
3. Experiments: research on the reception of individual types of content using declarative methods (questionnaires) and biometric measurements (face tracking and eye-tracking) enriched with a behavioural element.

The course of the project is illustrated in the attached diagram no 1.

Diagram no. 1. The project overview. Source: own research.

The first stage allowed for distinguishing 6 types of posts:

- Human story: a long post featuring one or more stories of patients severely affected by COVID-19, including children and pregnant women. A highly emotive content, with photos of COVID-19 patients or the symptoms of the disease itself.
- Reference to a joke: presentation of an argument or data in favour of vaccination, accompanied by a humorous graphic (usually a meme or a satirical drawing)
- Logical argumentation: a post presenting in a logical order (result, usually structured as a list of sub-items) the effects of vaccination, usually based on published scientific data
- Mocking anti-vaxxers: presentation of an argument or data in favour of vaccination, ending with an ironic reference to those who are against vaccination (in the form of a rhetorical question or ironic punch line)
- Visualisation of phenomena: a post whose main element is an informative and persuasive visualisation (infographic) that summarises or develops the content of the post
- Apparent infographics: a post whose text is complemented by a specific, text-based graphic element - usually a large frame with bulleted content.

The respondents evaluated the posts by completing a six-question questionnaire after each post (with each answer marked on a five-point scale: 1. Definitely not, 2. Rather not, 3. It's difficult to say, 4. Rather yes, 5. Definitely yes). The questions were as follows:

- Q1. In your opinion, is this post understandable to someone who is not a doctor or scientist?
- Q2. In your opinion, would this post be of interest to your social media friends?
- Q3. Would this post encourage your friends to seek information about COVID-19 vaccination?
- Q4. In your opinion, would anyone with doubts about the COVID-19 vaccination feel encouraged to take the vaccine after reading this post?
- Q5. Would you like this post if it was displayed on your friend's social media profile?
- Q6. Would you share this post on your social media profile?

The presentation will showcase comprehensive results, incorporating both the assessment of posts expressed in surveys (self reported data) and data collected with biometric measurements. Eye tracking and face tracking results have been integrated on a timeline, allowing the combination of information on which specific elements respondents focused their visual attention on and what emotions they likely experienced (at the moment of focusing on these elements). This enables the identification of effective persuasive types of posts and specifically the elements of these posts, meaning those that convince skeptical or unconvinced individuals to get vaccinated. Conversely, ineffective elements will be highlighted, i.e., those causing respondents' attitudes toward vaccination to remain negative or become even more negative.

Furthermore, patterns of reception for different types of posts by specific respondent groups are evident – individuals opposed to vaccinations tend to read content much more attentively and for a longer duration. They can appreciate the clarity and formal attractiveness of the text despite disagreeing with it on a substantive level. Vaccinated skeptics had nuanced responses and varied assessment schemas, demonstrating critical judgment and recognizing persuasive value. Fully vaccinated individuals showed less engagement, possibly due to a sense of security or familiarity with similar content in their social media "filter bubble."

		<p>At the time of abstract submission, final analyses are still ongoing. However, it can be generally stated that persuasive posts are effective when they include human stories and straightforward logical arguments, while ineffective content includes insults and mockery of those opposed to vaccinations.</p> <p>To conclude, the study proves that the mixed methods approach provide comprehensive findings on social media users' expectations for health content.</p>
	<p>Camelia Cmeciu (University of Bucharest), Anca Anton (University of Bucharest); Eugen Glavan (University of Bucharest)</p>	<p><b><i>The engaging power of online storytelling on COVID-19 vaccination in Romania</i></b></p> <p>The great challenge of public health authorities within the context of vaccine hesitancy is the selection of those content strategies that may diminish public uncertainty and ultimately trigger vaccine acceptance. Nowadays health message tailoring should take into account the postmodern medical paradigm (Kata, 2012) where non-experts' voices have been empowered through personal story sharing. The advent of technology has turned storytelling, "one of the earliest ways to share scientific advancements and discoveries" (Mojtahedzadeh et al., 2021, p. 63), into a digitalized form. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic technology has played an important role both at micro (among family members, friends), mezzo (national organization-public communication) and macro (international organization-public communication) levels.</p> <p>In the COVID-19 vaccines: Safety surveillance manual, WHO (2021) urged national authorities to embed stories as a content strategy in their communication campaign since storytelling "can be part of an authentic, personal approach to communicating via social media" (WHO, 2021).</p> <p>The Romanian authorities implemented this macro strategy of digitalized storytelling in their vaccination campaign under the form of a hashtag (#storiesfromvaccination/ #povestidelavaccinare), various online users posting their multimodal stories in Facebook posts, telling their experience with (COVID-19) vaccination.</p> <p>Therefore, our study has a fourfold purpose: (1) to investigate the types of message sources telling their online stories from (COVID19) vaccination; (2) to identify the types of points of view (POV) present in these stories; (3) to investigate the relationships between message sources and POVs and Facebook behaviors; (4) to present the narrative elements of the message sources' online stories.</p> <p><b>Conceptual framework &amp; research questions</b></p> <p>Narrative theory, health communication</p> <p>The polarization between the paradigmatic and the narrative pathways to knowledge related to health communication has been extensively discussed by in the literature (Hinyard &amp; Kreuter, 2007; Dahlstrom, 2014). Associated with the former pathway, scientific-based approach is mainly associated with messages tailored to communicate on potential risks, whereas personal experiences associated with the latter pathway are considered to have the following advantages: identification with story characters, self-reference through own experiences remembrance or story plot embedding culturally resonant elements (Chen et al., 2016; Larkey &amp; Hecht, 2010; Nan et al., 2015).</p> <p>In their analysis of the development of storytelling/ narrative theory (SNT), Lee et al. (2016) revise the literature on narrative core concepts and they identify transportation, identification, and realism as the core concepts of narrative theory. But these three narrative concepts are closely related to the type of narrator, in our case, to the type of the sources who send the health message. These message sources are of paramount importance to trigger changes in the online listeners' behavior and attitudes. Ihlen et al. (2021) consider that trust in information sources is an important driver in health campaigns. A national survey in Romania (IRES, 2021) showed that personal physicians, friends, parents and children were the most trusted</p>

sources for the vaccine supporters, opponents and undecided persons. Therefore, our study will address the following research question:

RQ1: What message sources told their stories in the #storiesfromvaccination campaign and what was their salience? Point of view is another aspect widely discussed in the literature on narrative theory and health communication (Chen et al., 2016; Nan et al., 2015). The literature where experiments were used as research method showed that unlike 3rd-person POVs that promote a listener's perspective, 1st person POVs make listeners more aware of risks or trigger a higher degree of self-referencing and identification with the narrator (Chen et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2016; Nan et al., 2015; Nan et al., 2017). Therefore, RQ2 is addressed:

RQ2: What types of POVs were embedded in the #storiesfromvaccination campaign? The literature on health-related narratives also describes besides the teller, the listener, the point of view, elements such as plots, material and social environments, and roles (Harter et al., 2022). In their study on vaccination narratives in conversation threads, Semino et al. (2023) analyzed the data taking into account three elements: complexity (single versus more actions/ events), plot focus (vaccine uptake, illness, side effects, etc.) and vaccine stance (pro-vaccination, hesitant, anti-vaccination or unclear). The following research question will be addressed:

RQ3: How were event complexity, plot focus and vaccine stance employed by various message sources in their stories? Digital storytelling and engagement

When analyzing digital storytelling, researchers should not only focus on the multimodal affordances employed (texts, pictures, audio, music, and video, Robin, 2016), but they should tackle upon the engaging power of these stories. Previous studies on vaccination message content and engagement showed that personal stories trigger positive online dialogues and higher engagement rates (Loft et al., 2020).

Starting from Gilpin et al.'s (2010) idea that engagement alongside authority, identity and transparency, is an important dimension in the socially mediated authenticity, the next research question is the following:

RQ4: What are the relationships between the message source and POVs employed in the #storiesfromvaccination campaign and the Facebook behaviors?

### **Methodology**

We used CrowdTangle to extract all the #storiesfromvaccination Facebook posts from the public ROVaccinare (ROVaccination) Facebook account. The data included 307 Facebook posts (April 5, 2021 – December 19, 2022). Starting from Lee's (2020) idea that source authenticity focuses on its claimed identity matching its real one, we identified, through an iterative process, the sources telling their experiences from vaccination. Three main types of sources were identified in all Facebook posts: health experts, laypersons, and role models.

We started from Spilioti's (2015) idea that social media stories unfold in interaction. Therefore, we assessed how all Facebook #storiesfromvaccination stories ranked to the engagement rate. Frequency analysis and simple regressions in SPSS were employed to explore the relationships between the engagement indicators and the three source messages and POVs. The following engagement indicators were taken into account: total interactions reactions, comments, and shares.

For the narrative analysis, all Facebook stories will be imported in QDA miner and we will perform a manual coding focusing on three narrative elements: event complexity, plot focus and (COVID19) vaccine stance.

### **Preliminary findings**

Relationships between message sources, POVs and online users' engagement behaviors

		<p>RQ1 and RQ2 addressed the salience of message sources and POVs used in the #storiesfromvaccination campaign. The results (Table 1) showed that stories told by laypersons were the most frequently employed (N=202) followed by experiences told by experts (N=76) and by roles models (N=19). The #storiesfromvaccination campaign focused on stories told by laypersons telling mostly their own story (1st POV, N=134), but also talking about family members (3rd POV, N=65). (Insert Table 1 here)</p> <p>RQ4 concerned the relationships between the three message sources, POVs and Facebook engagement behaviors (Table 2, 3). Whereas the stories told by experts were positively associated with the number of interactions (<math>\beta = 0.124</math>, <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>), laypersons as sources were negatively related to engagement behaviors (interaction - <math>\beta = -0.128</math>, <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, comments - <math>\beta = -0.129</math>, <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, shares - <math>\beta = -0.169</math>, <math>p &lt; 0.01</math>, Table 2) and role model posts did not generate statistically relevant engagement. As observed, although layperson posts had the highest frequency, they were not an engagement driver, on the contrary, they decrease engagement. In terms of reactions, sadness, anger, and surprise were the emotions having statistical relevance. But whereas the stories told by health experts positively predicted these reactions, the laypersons' stories were negatively related to these emotions.</p> <p>As observed in table 1, the focus was on stories embedding 1st and 3rd person POVs. 3rd person POV posts generate contradictory reactions, pointing to polarisation: they are more likely to generate love reactions, but at the same time, angry reactions (Table 3).</p> <p>Despite the high frequency of 1st person POV stories told by laypersons (Table 1), the regression analysis showed (Table 4) showed that this type of stories decrease engagement. 3rd POV stories told by experts generated the most engagement, particularly comments and shares, with statistically relevant reactions being wow, sad and angry, pointing to a conflictual polarisation. Role model posts generate more polarisation than the posts based on other types of sources (experts or laypersons), but the love/sad polarisation is not as conflictual as in the case of experts.</p> <p>For the final study, we will identify how various message sources employed the narrative elements in their stories on (COVID19) vaccination. The discussion will be carried out taking into account other studies relevant for the CEE region (Mihelj et al., 2022; Winiarska-Brodowska, 2022; Cmeciu, 2023).</p>
	<p>Kirsten Ulbrich (SRH University of Applied Sciences), Carolyn Pliquet (SRH University of Applied Sciences); Udo Bomnüter (Hochschule Macromedia University of Applied Sciences); Michael Beuthner (SRH University of Applied Sciences)</p>	<p><b><i>Social Media Actors as Communicators of Institutional Content during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Germany: Motivations and Strategies</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>In times of health emergencies, effective communication is crucial, as policymakers, the news media and especially the public expect accurate, reliable information and guidance in a timely manner (Hyer &amp; Covello, 2005). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people turned to digital channels to search for clarification and practical guidance (Anderson &amp; Vogels, 2020). Additionally, multiple actors were transmitting health-related data and facts via social media platforms (González-Padilla &amp; Tortolero-Blanco, 2020). The resulting massive amount of information spread and shared via digital media makes it difficult for recipients to filter for accurate information.</p> <p>Social media actors actively participate in the creation of content on social media (Nel &amp; Westlund, 2013). By communicating risk and disseminating information to their subscribers and followers, they may facilitate the viral spread of fake news and conspiracy theories (Valentini &amp; Kruckeberg, 2016). On the other hand, social media also provides new opportunities for communicating during a crisis through a rapid exchange of information in expert networks and the fast distribution of information to the public (Gupta et al., 2020). Consequently, journalists strive to check facts and counteract misinformation</p>



by providing reliable information through data, classifications, and assessments of the pandemic (Perreault & Perreault, 2021).

Despite extensive research on social media usage, reception, and trust (e.g., Melki et al., 2021; Cheng et al., 2017), the communication on social media platforms including the aims of social media actors remains underconceptualized. Our study thus evaluates the interplay between social media actors, journalists, and governmental institutions during crises through expert interviews. In this paper, we focus on the social media actors and their motivations, aims, and challenges in creating content on social media and how they assess other actors' communication during the pandemic.

#### **Literature review**

The COVID-19 pandemic can be defined as a health crisis caused by a previously unknown infectious disease spreading to new areas of the world (Klemm et al., 2019). Health crises are characterized by a pressing "need for specific and accurate information" (Sellnow & Seeger, 2003, p.16), high complexity, and scientific uncertainty (Capurro et al., 2021). Due to the abundance of unverified information and misinformation on the internet, the pandemic has been classified by the World Health Organization as an "infodemic" (Zarocostas, 2020).

Social media usage generally increases during crises (Gottlieb & Dyer, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic was accompanied by various health-related measures, such as mobility restrictions and recommendations for social distancing, which amplified the role of social interactions through technology platforms (Karhu et al., 2021). Communication took place mainly on social media and the screen time partly increased by 65% (Pišot et al., 2020).

Moreover, the traditional "one-way directional flow of news" by professional journalists (Chung, 2008, p. 658) has been challenged by the emergence of new media formats that allow audiences to actively engage in the dissemination and creation of news. People can directly "become the media" by sharing experiences, information, and opinions via online platforms such as content communities, social networking sites, blogs, and microblogs (Shen & Kuo, 2014, p.526). Social media has become a dissemination tool of information and misinformation (Gupta et al., 2020) for the general public and experts alike. This can be both advantageous and disadvantageous. The connectedness of social media allows for a rapid exchange in the scientific community, e.g., through the usage of preprints and algorithms sorting published studies. However, social media also amplifies the spread of misinformation and fake news through unofficial/non-institutionalized actors, overwhelming fact checkers' ability to verify all reporting (Venegas-Vera et al., 2020). The public tends to select media that align with their preferences for trusted news sources. "Echo-chambers" may arise as individuals share their perceptions and opinions with like-minded followers (Malecki et al., 2021; Melki et al., 2021). Circumstances during a crisis facilitate conspiracy theories to flourish due to people's experiences of threat and insecurity (Douglas, 2021). But social media also enables health experts and journalists to counter misinformation and to share links to more trustful sources (Malecki et al., 2021).

Social media users spread public health messages, knowledge about the virus, ways of mitigating an infection and humorous approaches, such as face mask memes (Karhu et al., 2021). They use various formats to share information multimodally such as text, pictures, audio, and video (Shen & Kuo, 2014). Sharing mechanisms as reposts can accelerate the dissemination of information, dramatically increasing the audience of a previously produced message (Shen & Kuo, 2014). Cinelli et al. (2018) explored social media communication on COVID-19, finding that social media actors may share information about the disease after being exposed to it, regardless of its trustworthiness. However, the spread of different kinds of content varied depending on the social media platform.

#### **Theory**

The two-step flow theory shows that mass communication content is mediated through personal contacts (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1966). So-called opinion leaders, who mediate mass media content to subgroups, have large networks of contacts and are particularly interested in certain domains (Winter & Neubaum, 2016). They are actively engaged in processes of gatekeeping when exposing media content to the public (Laughey, 2007).

New media environments such as social media challenge the traditional concept. Information diffusion in these environments depends on active opinion leaders mediating mass media content to rather passive social media users (Karlsen, 2015). Furthermore, opinion leaders may no longer need to rely on media information if they also have access to first-hand information (Walter & Brüggemann, 2018).

The curated flows framework by Thorson and Well (2016) builds on the two-step flow theory to explain how individual media users' information exposure is shaped by different curation logics: 1) journalistic curation (journalists as information providers), 2) strategic curation (professional political communicators addressing individuals), 3) personal curation (individuals managing their own information flow), 4) socially curated flow (information shared in individuals' social networks) and 5) algorithm curation (automated targeting).

#### **Methodology**

We used a quasi-inductive approach (Perry & Jensen, 2001), developing pre-categories from theory to guide our interviews. This allowed us to structure the research questions into five interrelated subdimensions:

- Social media actors' evaluation of risk-related information provided by governmental institutions
- Their requirements and needs regarding institutional content
- Their options for (multimodally) transforming institutional content
- Impact of the pandemic on their routines and practices for the communication of institutional content
- Assessment of social media actors' role during the pandemic
- Assessment of communication from journalists/the news media

To address these sub-questions, we used a two-stage multimethod design integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques. Based on an automated monitoring of German online media over ten weeks, we selected a stratified purposive sample of 30 social media actors and, for an additional perspective, 40 journalists. With the selection criteria reach and number of articles, we made sure to exclude reposts of existing content, ticker messages, and bots, leaving us with actors who created their own content or commented on existing content. We then conducted semi-structured interviews with, so far, 15 social media actors and 29 journalists. The interview guideline consisted of one introductory and five thematic blocks related to our sub-questions. The responses were subjected to software-based content analysis.

#### **Preliminary results**

Our media monitoring and interviews identified three categories of social media actors who act as opinion leaders with different intentions:

- 1) Experts with a personal background in medicine or health-related fields
- 2) Local bloggers motivated by the lack of media representation for their region
- 3) Dissatisfied citizens seeking to hold government accountable.

Preliminary results suggest tendencies in perceived challenges of social media actors, their methods of publishing content online and their perspectives on journalists (and vice versa). Social media actors' communication challenges vary highly depending on the categorization outlined above, warranting further analysis.

		<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>Despite its limitation to a small data set of German social media actors and journalists, our study reveals tendencies of social media communication in crisis. Social media actors can be considered opinion leaders that are trusted by many in their area of expertise. By editing and filtering official content, they add their perspective to institutional information and act as gatekeepers. Further analysis will reveal more about their publishing behavior and motivations for posting content.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Our findings highlight the increasingly important role of social media actors in the context of crisis communication, especially health crises. By addressing shortcomings in provided institutional content, they might contribute to optimizing the interplay between social media actors and governmental institutions, public health care organizations, and journalists. Moreover, mapping social media actors' (re)editing processes will enable governmental institutions to assess their role in disseminating health-related content. Consequently, such suggestions can contribute to optimizing communication flow and a deeper understanding of motivations and routines underlying distrust and the spreading of misinformation and disinformation on social media.</p>
	<p>Anna Mierzecka (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Navigating Vaccination Perspectives: Trust, Information Sources, and Cognitive Authorities among Polish Parents in the Digital Era</i></b></p> <p>Since A. Wakefield published an article suggesting a potential link between MMR vaccines and autism, there has been a surge in vaccine skepticism. Particularly prominent in Europe, this phenomenon has led to a resurgence of diseases like measles, causing significant outbreaks in countries such as Ukraine and subsequently spreading to other nations (Hadjipanayis et al., 2020) (Hadjipanayis et al., 2020). The discourse surrounding vaccines has further intensified with the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, resulting in a deepening polarization of opinions. The issue of vaccinating children with mandatory vaccinations holds particular significance. Parents find themselves in a difficult position where their choice influences not only their health but also that of their children. One of the critical factors influencing their decision is the choice of a relevant source of information.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered communication patterns, with a shift towards digital media for social connection as well as sourcing information (Nguyen, 2020). Does this mean that parents will also trust digital sources of information when seeking vaccine-related information? Do they use digital technologies to search for information, or do they, conversely, turn toward traditional methods to obtain information? It is a complex question; the level of trust in vaccine information sources and the influencing factors can vary based on individual circumstances, healthcare systems, and cultural considerations. Factors such as vaccine-related concerns, healthcare providers, and the quality of health services can impact parental trust in vaccine information sources, and these are the subjects of numerous studies (e. g. Alawneh, Saymeh, Yasin, Alawneh, &amp; Al-Tatari, 2020; Chen, Lin, Chang, Chou, &amp; Yen, 2021; Eller, Henrikson, &amp; Opel, 2019; Hwang &amp; Shah, 2019; Kowalska, Gajda, Barański, &amp; Brackowska, 2019; Liu, Hsiao, Chen, Lin, &amp; Yen, 2023; Stasiuk, Polak, Dolinski, &amp; Maciuszek, 2021).</p> <p>The theoretical framework for this study is P. Wilson's "cognitive authority" theory (Wilson, 1983). According to Wilson's theory, when dealing with knowledge that does not arise from personal experience, the assessment of a message's credibility is largely based on the authority (author, source) behind it. The authority does not necessarily need to be associated with a specific person; it can also be an institution or a type of source, such as an encyclopedia or journal. An individual may refer to different authorities in different areas of life. This framework allows us to address many complex phenomena in the study,</p>

but in this abstract, we want to focus on two research questions: RQ1) What sources of information do parents find credible? RQ2) What cognitive authorities enhance the credibility of information in the eyes of parents?

The study encompasses two stages of empirical research: in-depth interviews and surveys conducted with both Polish and Ukrainian parents. For the ICA conference, my intention is to present the results of the research specifically focusing on Polish respondents. Thirteen participants were involved in the in-depth interviews, with seven expressing support for vaccination and six being skeptical or opposed to vaccination. The recruitment of participants for the interviews involved the distribution of questionnaires in kindergartens, with a request to share them with parents. Additionally, recruitment was facilitated through social media platforms, particularly groups and pages targeted at parents. The survey, involving a representative group of Polish parents (n=1000), was conducted through the Ariadna panel.

Participants in the interviews were asked about sources that inspire their trust and that they most frequently utilize. Respondents rated the frequency of using specific types of sources on a scale from 1 to 5 (Doctors at the clinic, Pages of government institutions, Books/articles related to health topics, Pages of medical institutions, Friends who have children, Family members, Groups on social media, Specific profiles on social media, YouTube recordings). It is important to note that these questions were not aimed at measuring the actual level of usage of the mentioned sources by respondents but rather at understanding which sources they would point to.

Detailed results, along with a breakdown of preferences among supporters and opponents of vaccinations, will be described during the presentation. However, it can be observed that generally, vaccination supporters (both in interviews and surveys) most commonly pointed to doctors as their source of information, with government institution pages coming in second. Both of these categories were not popular among anti-vaccination advocates, who, in the survey, primarily identified family members and friends as their main sources of information, with books and articles ranking third. During interviews, opponents of vaccinations notably emphasized the use of books and articles.

Interestingly, both groups declared infrequent use of any sources related to social media, such as Groups on social media, Specific profiles on social media, or YouTube recordings. Apparently, both groups, regardless of how their actual usage of these media as sources of information looks, distanced themselves from indicating them as credible sources of information. Similarity can also be noted in the reliance on sources with which the participants have a direct relationship – for vaccination supporters, it is doctors, and for opponents, it is individuals in their close circle, namely family and friends.

These observations indicate that even if, as shown by studies, the use of social media has increased (Wong, Ho, Olusanya, Antonini, & Lyness, 2021), the trust bestowed upon these sources has not grown, at least concerning vaccine-related matters. The heightened utilization of digital technologies in communication, observed post-pandemic, may translate into new communication channels (telehealth appointments, conversations through messaging apps with close ones), but we do not observe the emergence of new credible sources.

\*Organized in cooperation with CEECOM / ECREA CEE Network

16.30-18.15	<b>1.11 Media Performance in Times of War</b> <b>Chairs: Dorota Piontek, Bartłomiej Biskup</b>  Room 1.132	<b>Abstract</b>
	Melinda Weathers (Western Carolina University); Marceleen Mosher (University of Minnesota)	<p><b><i>Social Media and Environmental Communication: Framing Climate Change as a Public Health Issue on Facebook</i></b></p> <p><b>Conceptual Framework</b></p> <p>There is a growing understanding that global climate change represents a profound threat to the health and well-being of all life worldwide (IPCC, 2022). Climate change increases health hazards throughout the world by decreasing air quality, stimulating more extreme weather events, creating conditions that favor increases in food, water, and vector-borne infections, and enhancing heat stress conditions. Not surprisingly, all of these conditions have great potential to negatively impact our health.</p> <p>Mass media play critical roles in the identification and interpretation of social and environmental issues (Boykoff &amp; Boykoff, 2007). This is particularly true for climate change, as most adults gain their understanding of the issue from the mass media (Wilson, 2000). Through framing, media can influence what issues are important, how issues should be viewed (Kim et al., 2002), and who should be held responsible for specific social problems (Iyengar, 1991). Regarding media framing, communication scholars have paid relatively little attention to news coverage of the public health consequences of climate change, focusing mostly on climate change news media as an environmental issue (e.g., Corbett &amp; Durfee, 2004).</p> <p>A public health frame for climate change has the potential to provide an understandable, effective, and motivating frame for news about the phenomena’s risks, effects, and social conditions (Campbell et al., 2023; Maibach et al., 2008). By defining the relevance of climate change in ways that connect to the core values of specific audience segments, news media and those utilizing it can foster enhanced public engagement with the issue. For example, research has found—that a news article about the public health implications—rather than the environmental or national security implications—of climate change was the most likely to elicit emotional reactions from Americans consistent with support for climate change mitigation and adaptation (Myers et al., 2012). As such, there is much the media can do to increase the salience of the human health consequences associated with climate change.</p> <p>However, we lack information about how the news media represents climate change as a public health issue. To our knowledge, there are only two studies of US print news coverage that have been published on this topic (Weathers, 2013; Weathers &amp; Kendall, 2015). Yet, with advancements in digital technologies (e.g., Facebook) offering news organizations cost-effective communication tools to reach a wide range of audiences (Korda &amp; Itani, 2013), more work is necessary to understand how frames regarding the human health implications of climate change are presented to the American public across various media channels. The rise of social media and its dominant share in people’s news consumption make it an important phenomenon to study in the context of climate change and public health (Corner, 2017).</p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>The proposed study seeks to fill this gap by examining US news media coverage of the public health implications of climate change on Facebook, the most widely used social networking site. Here, we use CrowdTangle to analyze 78,492 Facebook posts on climate change as an issue of public health from 16 news media organizations (e.g., Los Angeles Times, The New</p>

York Times, ABC News, FOX News) between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2022. This study will assess various aspects of climate change messages including public health impacts, and climate change action and efficacy, as well as temporality and spatiality of climate impact. Prior research has found that these aspects of general climate change messages can influence members of the public (Doherty & Webler, 2016; Hart & Feldman, 2016). However, it is not known whether (and how) they are incorporated (1) in messages created by the news media regarding the human health implication of climate change, nor (2) in messages distributed through social media platforms like Facebook. By examining the discourse surrounding climate change in health contexts, this study will provide a baseline assessment of how climate change, as a public health issue, is being presented to the American public through news outlets' social media platforms and offer suggestions for media and environmental practitioners to better reach and influence these individuals.

#### **Research Questions**

To what extent does news coverage on Facebook discuss climate change? What are the differences between traditional print news media outlets and television news outlets?

To what extent does news coverage on Facebook discuss the public health implications of climate change? What are the differences between traditional print news media outlets and television news outlets?

What specific public health impacts of climate change are discussed? What are the differences between traditional print news media outlets and television news outlets?

How do US news media use temporality and spatiality aspects of climate change public health impacts in their Facebook messages? What are the differences between traditional print news media outlets and television news outlets?

To what extent does news coverage discuss actions to fight the public health implications of climate change in their Facebook messages? What are the differences between traditional print news media outlets and television news outlets?

To what extent does news coverage discuss efficacy of fighting against the public health implications of climate change in their Facebook messages? What are the differences between traditional print news media outlets and television news outlets?

#### **Preliminary Findings**

Preliminary results indicate that public health threats have been a dramatically underreported dimension in climate change news coverage on Facebook. Between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2022, 78,492 climate change-focused posts appeared. However, during this period only 7.3% (5,729) of posts framed climate change as an issue of public health. Moreover, through intercoder reliability training, comparatively few posts used issue-specific frames that mentioned the public health-related implications of climate change (e.g., extreme heat, poor air quality, vector-borne disease). Given this finding, we anticipate we will find a similar lack of news coverage on climate change action and efficacy, as well as temporality and spatiality of climate impact, as the analysis continues.

Cognitive research over the past several decades has shown that how experts, policy-makers, and journalists “frame” an issue greatly influences how the public understands the nature of the problem, the personal relevance or societal importance of the problem, who or what they see as being responsible for the problem, and what they feel should be done to address the problem (Nisbet, 2009; Scheufele, 1999). As the preliminary results of this study indicate, public health threats have been a dramatically underreported dimension of the climate change story. A growing amount of evidence in the US, and to a lesser extent worldwide, strongly suggests that increased news coverage of the health relevance of climate change is likely to result in increased public engagement in climate change and support for ambitious climate policies (Campbell et al., 2023). By

		<p>examining the discourse surrounding climate change in health contexts, this study provides a baseline assessment of how climate change, as a public health issue, is being presented to the global public through social media and offers suggestions for media, environmental, and communication practitioners to better reach and influence these individuals.</p>
	<p>Andrzej Meler (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń); Radosław Sojak (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń); Beata Królicka (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)</p>	<p><b><i>Does hydrogen fuel its own discourse? The case of Polish social media debate</i></b></p> <p>Regardless of the many controversies about how to solve the climate crisis, we seem to agree on one thing: this solution will have to be based, among other things, on new technologies in the field of energy. In turn, numerous studies from the field of science-technology studies (STS) indicate that the success or failure of innovations does not solely depend on the technical functionality of new solutions (Collins &amp; Pinch 1998). Even considering economic viability does not exhaust the circumstances affecting the fate of technological innovations. Interestingly, numerous findings from these studies have addressed, important in the context of the hydrogen transition, failed attempts related to electromobility (Callon 2014; Latour 2014). All of them suggest that an important role for the acceptance or rejection of new technological solutions is played by the public discourse shaping the public understanding of innovation.</p> <p>The study presented was conducted as a part of the ‘Safe Hydrogen’ research project carried out by the Lukaszewicz – ORGMASZ Research Institute with funding from the ‘Science for Society’ programme of the Ministry of Education and Science, and focuses on analysing the discourse on hydrogen technologies in social media. Between March 2022 and April 2023, 35,000 posts were collected from Twitter (tweets), YouTube (comments under videos), Facebook (posts on profiles dealing with hydrogen), forums of horizontal and industry portals (comments under articles). From this material, 5,500 posts were drawn for expert coding, with entire threads (e.g.: the entire discussion under the YouTube video, not just the ‘extracted’ comments) retained in the sample to capture contexts. In the end, after coding, it emerged that 3,500 directly related to hydrogen. On the basis of the material thus identified, the extent to which ongoing conversations and disputes in social media define the development of hydrogen technology in terms of: technological barriers, economic viability, environmental impact, geopolitical significance, relationship to other energy technologies, political gamesmanship was examined. The material was also analysed for emotional attitudes using both expert coding and automated sentiment analysis.</p> <p>The preliminary quantitative findings of the study revealed that the discourse around the development of hydrogen technology is non-autonomous and functions as an ephemera of discourses around electromobility, geopolitics or ecology. To the researchers’ surprise, it turned out that the ecological theme does not dominate Polish discussions on hydrogen. The undefined nature of this discourse means that although it has the potential to support the development of hydrogen technologies in Poland, it also carries the danger of becoming one of the barriers to this development.</p> <p>A qualitative analysis of the discourse has revealed as an essential feature of the hydrogen debates so far: the strong – though differently articulated – conviction that the hydrogen transition is not, will not and probably cannot be a process of spontaneous bottom-up innovation. Whether because of the frequent news stories about governmental, European and generally state investment; or because of the belief that hydrogen is entangled in geopolitical powerplays; or for conspiratorial interpretations in terms of lobbies and blocking interest groups – the hydrogen transition is unlikely to enjoy the spontaneous and enthusiastic reception in public debate that few technological innovations of the last half-century have enjoyed.</p>
	<p>Daria Zadrożniak (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)</p>	<p><b><i>Communication on climate change. How do Polish media users evaluate their own knowledge and the media performance?</i></b></p> <p><b>Aims of the study</b></p>

The aim of the study is to explore the Polish media users' perceptions and expectations towards media coverage of climate change. In study, we focus on people's awareness, knowledge, and actions related to climate change, as well as their media competencies and evaluations on media performance. In the exploratory stage of the study, we compare and contrast media users' cohorts based on age, gender, and education.

#### **Conceptual framework**

Global warming, extreme weather events, and raising of the sea level are only few examples of the climate change results. Although climate change is not a new phenomenon in the geological history of Earth, the reason of the current change is particular. Namely, these are the human actions which lead to 'altering the composition of the global atmosphere' (IPCC, 2018, p. 544). Those changes started by Industrial Revolution (mid-18th century – mid-19th century). Since that period people have been emitting greenhouse gases on the massive scale due to using fossil fuels (Kardaś, 2021, p. 58). Later on, numerous other human activities, such as transportation, production of the basic products (like food or clothes), or the use of the electronic devices, have had an impact on progressing climate change.

According to Giddens' Paradox (2010, p. 10), as long as dangers of global warming are not immediate and visible in everyday life, people will not want to change anything in their habits. However, once these threats become severe, it will be too late to counter them. This is the reason why pro-environmental movements (like Youth Strike) regularly protest all around the world. They claim that all societies need to change their behaviors and actions to mitigate the effects of climate change. To achieve this, the level of people's awareness and knowledge about this phenomenon should increase. Only then, people will better understand the problem the Earth is dealing with now. Media – as the one of the main information sources – may play important role in transmission of the information about climate change. Hence, it is worth analyzing the media content, as well as the citizens' competences and expectations towards media performance.

The previous research (Maibach et al, 2011; Leiserowitz et al, 2021; DEFRA, 2008) has shown that messages tailored to the specific groups of recipients are necessary factor in an effective communication. In order to understand people's needs and expectations towards media coverage on climate change, one needs to learn more about beliefs, awareness, motivations, and behaviors across different demographic segments of the media users.

#### **Research questions**

For the purposes of the study following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: How Polish people assess a level of their media competences?

Due to functions of media such as educational and shaping opinion (McBride, 1980; McCombs, 2004), this source of information may be significant in the society's learning process about climate change. In the media coverage, we notice messages compatible with scientific consensus – which indicates human actions as a cause of climate change (Stocker et al., 2013) as well as those blaming natural processes or even denying the occurrence of this phenomenon. Moreover, Hansen (2019) indicates that environmental and climate communication is particularly vulnerable to manipulation in the online information sources (e.g., social media platforms). In the distinction of the value and truthfulness of those types of news, examination of people's media competencies is crucial (e.g., their knowledge about the difference between information and opinion, and ability to verify information).

RQ2: How Polish people assess their level of awareness and knowledge on climate change?



		<p>For a better understanding of people’s perception of climate change, we asked respondents about their knowledge of this phenomenon (e.g., self-assessment of this concept’s knowledge, and opinion on climate change’s causes) and actions taken to protection of the environment. In the next step, we analyzed the received answers in terms of demographic differences.</p> <p>RQ3: What are perceptions and expectations of Polish people towards media performance on covering climate change?</p> <p>The previous research (Bilandzic, Kalch &amp; Soentgen, 2017) showed that framing climate change news in the media coverage may have a relevant impact on people’s perception and engagement with climate actions. On the other hand, the audience’s expectations towards both media and its content might be key information for journalists (e.g., climate journalists) and educators for more effective communication about the problem. Therefore, we paid attention to both media coverage and people’s reception of it – whether the audience notices such news at all (and if so, whether the amount of them is efficient), which topics in the media coverage they link to the climate change problem, and how they perceive those messages (as positive or negative).</p> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <p>In order to answer research questions, a CATI survey was conducted on a representative sample of adult Poles – from July 24 to August 9, 2023 (N=800). The questionnaire consisted of three main parts. First of them examined media competences. Second part was devoted to a level of awareness and knowledge on climate change. Third part was designed to collect respondents’ opinions about the media coverage on climate change.</p> <p><b>Preliminary findings</b></p> <p>The preliminary findings show that majority of Polish media users assessed their media competences as ‘good’ (44%) or ‘very good’ (30%). Also, participants of the study estimated their knowledge of climate change quite high – mostly as ‘good’ (35%) or ‘very good’ (34%). For the main source of information, they indicate mostly news websites (44%), although in the television they find news about climate change the most frequently (43%). In the respondents’ opinion the tone of majority of this news is ‘rather negative’ (65%), and media focuses on ecological disaster topic (65%).</p>
	<p>Dali Osepashvili (IBSU / International Black Sea University)</p>	<p><b><i>The role of digital media in the environmental activism</i></b></p> <p>The environmental issue is one of the global challenges which faces all Countries but for the Georgian media, it is not current or a priority to cover it. This is confirmed by the studies and monitoring carried out on this topic in the Georgian media. According to the results of the first media monitoring conducted in 2012, the Georgian media was rarely interested in environmental issues (problems) and this had mostly a campaign character (Izoria, T., 2012). An American researcher Prof. Freedman who conducted the study on the coverage of environmental issues in Georgian media mentioned that, “despite major ecological challenge [...], news organizations in Georgia provide little environmental coverage to their audiences” (Freedman, 2021) and as he emphasized, it should be explained with four main reasons: shortcomings of journalists and news organizations; access to information and news sources; lack of priority; and lack of public demand (Freedman, 2021). A recent study on this topic, which was conducted by Westminster Foundation, identifies 7 challenges and gaps why climate and environmental issues are covered by Georgian media less and superficially: “lack of priority; lack of effective training; Awareness, sensitivity, and basic climate literacy; Information sources and access to public information; Limited specialization of journalists; Engagement with different stakeholders; Lack of resources” (Janashia, N., Gverdsiteli, G., Kavtaradze. L. (2022).</p>

In the era of digital media when the way of spreading information has been changed, it is interesting how environmental communication is used in order to engage audience in Georgia. According to Hindmarsh, “the emergence of digital technologies has impacted the environmental movement by increasing the speed and scope of its messages worldwide” (Hindmarsh, 2021, Environmental activism in the digital age).

So, the goal of this presentation is to show the results of the study of the role of social media platforms in the digital environmental activism as an example of Georgia. Over the last few years there are a few studies which discuss digital environmental activism, for example, as Hindmarsh emphasized that social and digital media are already assisting environmental movements to participate in pressure politics more successfully (Hindmarsh, R., & Calibeo, D. L. 2017). Jacqmarcq investigates the connections between environmental activism and technologies (Jacqmarcq, M. 2021). Some authors named environmental activists as an “eco-influencers” (Cornelio and et. All, 2021).

In environmental activism, there are 2 types of the digital activism: “fast activism” (Harlow and Harp, 2012) and “slacktivism” as a slow, passive activism (Delfanti, A., & Arvidsson, A. (2019).

Some studies discuss digital environmental activism in different countries (Goodman, 2016; Jun, 2016; Abidin et al, 2020; Knupfer et all. 2023; Kaur, 2015; McDonald, 2021; Susanto et. al., 2021; Tuli, 2021; Hindmarsh, 2022. etc.), but this kind of research has not been conducted in Georgia, which emphasizes novelty and relevance of this study.

This research is based on a qualitative approach - the main methods are semi-structured interviews with active users of the social media platforms and a qualitative content analysis of digital environmental activists’ pages on Facebook.

As for the research questions, these are the following: what is the role of the digital media in environmental activism? Which social media platforms are used by activists? Which type of the activism is used by Georgian digital environmental activists? According to the results of this study, slacktivism is mainly observed in Georgian social media platforms, when people try to express their positions with electronic petitions, by avatar frames or using hashtags.

There are some platforms on Facebook where environmental activists and volunteers are united, but until now, there was only one case that actively gathered citizens on the social media platform Facebook – the movement “My City Is Killing Me”. Over 5 years, there are up to 15 thousand solved problems. Social activists who strengthened the public desire to save the capital city. These young people, with the help of the public, talk about the main problems which worry everyone and try to find the ways to solve them every day - The movement "My city is killing me" appeared 5 years ago. Activists of this page demanded the replacement of yellow minibuses and taxis in order to reduce emissions in the city. And now they are fighting to eliminate ecological and social problems, to improve the quality of air, food and water. From its start to the present day, their team has been constantly working to solve pressing problems for society. This is a voluntary movement. They do everything voluntarily. At this stage, 35 people from different professions, from students to lecturers, are united in the team. The founder of this movement is a PR and marketing specialist. He is not an ecologist by profession, simply, this situation and life made him decide go in this direction. He uses the experience gained in the process of work to strengthen environmental communication, to raise awareness – to give a public lecture in various directions, make presentations in schools, etc.

There are also some other Facebook groups and pages which often publish the facts of environmental pollution, deforestation, logging, as well as tree planting, environmental cleaning, etc.

As it was revealed by qualitative interviews, if social media activities and campaigns are not reduced, public awareness will be affected and problems will be solved. For example, the protests started against the construction of Namahkhvan Power

		<p>Station, were initially spread through social media, and the results are visible. The construction of this Electric Power Station was stopped. The problem of the transfer of Racha forests has also been solved, also thanks to the activity of social media. As the questioned respondents emphasized, despite the existence of environmental groups or pages on Facebook, activism is still passive. It was the only case of manifestation of not only environmental activism, but also civil digital activism in general, when thousands of young volunteers mobilized through Facebook on June 13, 2015, to clean the environment of Tbilisi affected by the flood and help people affected by the disaster.</p> <p>The results of the study showed that, digital environmental activism is not very active in Georgia but volunteers are trying to use different campaigns and strategies in order to raise public awareness on climate and environmental protection and on the other hand, to draw the attention of competent people to solve specific problems. And thus, the role of social media is evidently increasing day by day.</p> <p>Key words: Digital Environmental Activism; Digital Media; Social Media; Facebook; Digital Activism</p>
	<p>Adrianna Jezierska (University of Bristol)</p>	<p><b><i>The role of influencers in changing public opinions about vegan practice. Framing of the vegan-climate discourses on social media</i></b></p> <p>Can social media influencers effectively change their followers' opinions about veganism? This project explores this question and the representations of vegan social media influencers at the turn of the environmental crisis and social media discourses, using YouTube videos as a case study.</p> <p>The interest in veganism as it pertains to this project is inspired by the growing concerns surrounding climate change and the role of food systems in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Animal-based products significantly contribute to climate change through their production. To mitigate this, plant-based eating and veganism have gained widespread popularity in recent years as effective measures for combating climate change (Lee et al., 2023).</p> <p>There is an increasing public understanding of the climate-related consequences of food, farming, and consumption, with more individuals seeking plant-based alternatives or adopting fully vegan lifestyles (Doyle, 2016; Kristiansen et al., 2021). However, climate change and veganism remain contested, which is likely due to the political nature of those topics. Climate change has become part of political agendas, and individuals' decisions to act on climate change often reflect their political leanings or views. This has been reflected in the literature on veganism, which has thus far considered veganism synonymous with the animal rights movement, focusing on political action as the focal point of social change (Cherry, 2006). This focus has oriented researchers towards vegan social movements and conceptualised them as collective action organisations with shared, collective identities aimed at the state or corporations (Benford &amp; Snow, 2000). The literature is almost exclusively focused on the classic approach of manifestation of social movements: leafleting, demonstrations, protests and other forms of collective action via the channel of social movement organisations or activists.</p> <p>Communicative technologies have offered considerable benefits to individuals' engagement in social movements, mobilisation and expansion of movement actions via technological features. For instance, the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street or #MeToo are prominent examples of amassing public support on social media and exemplifying pressure on the governments. These movements, often with a leaderless organisation, have successfully utilised various communications strategies for mobilisation, making social media 'a mine of information' for social movement studies, as more social movement organisations rely on the organisation of their membership and actions online (Venturini et al., 2018). The communicative content of messages, posts and social media traces constitute the object of social movement studies to investigate the mobilisation mechanisms for collective action. Social movement literature offers us means to examine such</p>

mobilisation mechanisms, usually through framing, which employs 'more culturally resonant terms that have the greatest potential for influence. They use words and images highly salient in the culture, which is to say noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged' (Entman, 2003). If these efforts of mobilisation for change or counter-narratives fail, it is often because the strategic media and communication did not exert enough pressure, leaving protest and street mobilisation as alternatives to bring about the change (Bendaña, 2006).

Whilst this line of research has offered useful conceptualisation and problematisation at the intersection of social movements and communications, researchers have called for a broader research agenda to address the complexity of communication dynamics in social movements (Obregón & Tufte, 2017). The authors recommend a more comprehensive understanding of social movements, which constantly change due to not only political but also social and cultural factors. Currently, there has been a proliferation of social actors participating in social movements across the globe. Concomitantly, a new discourse surrounding activism and social movements has gained prominence, with new types of actors and stakeholders developing novel ways of collective action, often at the intersection of new technologies. This shift in the landscape of social movements has far-reaching implications for our understanding of collective action and the dynamics of social change, making it go beyond the political phenomena.

Perhaps veganism to support climate crisis should not be viewed solely through political phenomenon. This project argues that veganism can be seen distinctively from activism and collective action. The emerging literature on lifestyle movements can offer an alternative theoretical lens for studying the vegan phenomena as it brings our attention to personal identity and lifestyle consumption (Haenfler et al., 2012). This project is particularly interested in how social media influencers use climate-vegan frames on YouTube and to what extent they can effectively mobilise their followers to practice change. The difference between social and lifestyle movements is important and offers interesting research avenues as it shifts the focus from social movement leaders and activists to other critical actors of social change, including social media influencers.

Haenfler, Johnson and Jones (2012) theorised cultural entrepreneurs as lifestyle movement leaders who gain fame and followers through engaging and producing cultural items rather than formal leadership. As opposed to activists, cultural entrepreneurs use consensus-based tactics and alignment with dominant institutional structures (Gheihman, 2021). As such, social media influencers are one of the types of cultural entrepreneurs in digital media. They have unique characteristics and personal charisma to serve as 'lifestyle experts' and 'charismatic leaders' by presenting everyday practices as a desirable and aspirational set of choices rather than an ideological identity. This project extends it to veganism; in a way, this promotion as an exclusive lifestyle has the paradoxical effect of legitimising it in the eyes of mainstream culture while also making it unattainable for some (Gheihman, 2020).

Research on social media influencers has primarily focused on self-presentation in the marketing domain and the commerciality of their activities. Social media influencers' strategies to build rapport and intimacy with their followers include transparency, desirable image or storytelling (Hudders et al., 2021). However, what happens if vegan social media influencers move away from their commercial work to their communicative work? This research project argues that vegan social media influencers leverage the meaning of vegan practice by dis-identifying from veganism and climate change and sharing more personalised content through personal stories and framing to romanticise the vegan practice. Therefore, making it a distinctively different form of framing as compared with activists who focus on the crisis and alarmist discourses (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2023).

		<p>As such, to test this hypothesis, this project aims to highlight the specific role of social media influencers in mobilising public discourse about environmental issues via social media. I suggest that social media influencers act as distinct agents of environmental change by effectively utilising action frames of de-identification from veganism, consumption and aspirational lifestyles. To understand the effectiveness of mobilisation, this project will investigate the specific frames of vegan social media influencers, namely analysing how they frame information to communicate with their followers.</p> <p>To answer the questions and hypothesis, this project uses computational social science and big data to analyse YouTube videos of vegan social media influencers. A sample of YouTube videos are being transcribed and analysed using topic modelling and thematic analysis to identify the key strategies vegan influencers use to promote and mobilise vegan practice. In the following, a sample of video comments will be analysed using sentiment analysis to track the responses of their followers. This project is currently a work in progress, and the researcher is analysing video data. Additional social media data will be investigated in later stages, and the researcher is currently seeking API approval for TikTok to extend this data analysis. In the last step of this project, the researcher will interview vegan social media influencers to gain in-depth knowledge about action frames and their self-presentation online.</p> <p>I aspire for this project's outcomes to serve as a significant contribution to the ongoing discourse on effective communication techniques aimed at addressing the climate emergency. Despite the increasing prevalence of sustainable practices, certain low-carbon practices remain controversial. However, by leveraging influential digital media figures, we have the potential to encourage the wider adoption of environmental solutions.</p>
16.30-18.15	<p><b>1.14 Fighting for Order and Attention: Datafied Discourses and Practices</b>  <b>Chairs: Katarzyna Kopecka Piech, Sara Monaci</b></p> <p>Room 1.138</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Gaia Casagrande (University of Milano)</p>	<p><b><i>Commercial drones and the airspace: from the subjective to the collective</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Nowadays, commercial and civic drones are becoming increasingly present in our daily lives: to shoot striking panoramas of nature, for spectacular shows at public events, for mapping endangered territories, transporting small objects to inaccessible places, and so on.</p> <p>We have been witnessing the domestication of the commercial drone as a communication media, both in civil and commercial settings. In the last years, scholars have also begun to question this phenomenon, observing it from various aspects, ranging from political analyses to aesthetic and visual studies. However, there are still few analyses that dwell on the media and communication aspects that this technology brings, and its relation with civic society. Therefore, this paper seeks to make a contribution to filling this gap.</p> <p>In detail, the contribution of this paper is twofold.</p> <p>On the one hand, it seeks to provide additional information regarding subjective experience, by framing drone technology as a hyper-sensory media and identifying its main characteristics in its relationship with the user and the space.</p>

On the other, it delves into the experience of the commercial drone as a collective experience, and is understood here as a tool for the claiming and (re)appropriation of airspace by different social actors in order to renegotiate social space. As I will elaborate on in the course of the paper, drone technology is an ambiguous technology, encompassing elements that need a critical look. Consequently, the analysis will also focus on the tensions underlying the relationship between drones, users, and space.

#### **Features of the media drone**

Understood as a media and technological object, the drone presents characteristics important to address. Among these, for instance, that one of being a “multi-sensory” medium. The drone sees, moves, captures thermic information, produces, and collects sounds, and that’s why it can be approached as a medium that modifies and organizes human perception. For some scholars, the drone creates ‘forms of “non-human sensing”, going beyond its optical characteristic and leading to amplified and extended human senses. For others, the drone produces ‘multisensory knowledge in human and nonhuman terms’.

Another relevant characteristic is related to its inherent asymmetry. Indeed, the drone whether military or commercial, always contains within itself an asymmetry all to the detriment of the subject below. This asymmetry induces, in both top-down and bottom-up perspectives, a perceptual re-modulation of space and surroundings, in which the dimension of verticality is suddenly included. The 'asymmetry of the drone is thus directly related to its "operating vertically," acting directly on the perception of space and the sovereignty of space.

Drones can play a role in the design and production of airspace - which is also shaped through infrastructure, dominated by regulations, and structured on the basis of ownership relationships. Thus, access to airspace has to be claimed also through resistance practices emerging in the vertical dimension. Using drones to claim airspace can be an opportunity for resistance but it presents limits and ambiguities at the same time.

#### **Methodology**

In order to investigate the relationship between commercial drones and airspace, I used two different qualitative research methods.

First, I performed auto technography flying my drone DJI Mavic Mini several times. Here, I follow auto-drone-technography, “the self-reflective engagement with technology and through that technology to tap into a technological unconscious”. This auto-technographic study thus helped me to understand not only the drone technology itself but especially the relationship between the user’s perception, the technology, and the space. In short, the auto-drone-technography allowed me to collect data from a subjective dimension.

In addition to the auto technography, and in order to collect more information from a collective perspective, I decided to proceed with the analysis of an original case study, concerning the naturalistic area of Lago Bullicante in Rome, also including an exploratory interview with a privileged witness.

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss the findings derived both from the auto technography and the case study, therefore addressing the subjective and collective dimensions.

#### **Auto-drone-technography**

I approached the auto technography, with the following research question in mind: as a drone operator, how do I perceive the space around me through my “additional and extended eye”, which I can control and monitor remotely?

In moving the drone through space, coordination plays a key role. The gaze must monitor both the screen that replicates what the drone sees from above as the object-drone itself, and how it moves in the surrounding environment. This task is far from obvious and becomes gradually more complex as the environment itself becomes more complex.

Moreover, civilian or toy drones must necessarily be operated in close proximity to the operator. Therefore, the extended perception of the territory occurs in the same portion of space and extends the operator's senses in real time. In the moment we step into the shoes of the operator our perception of space changes, and so does our awareness of it. As the sphere of action and view expands, I became aware of elements I was completely unaware of, and as a result, the environment around me takes on a different kind of meaning.

However, it is important to mention that my perception of space changes also when I experience the presence of the drone from below when I see one or more drones flying over my head.

Those who are on the ground do not really know who is flying that drone and why, and what kind of information or actions they want to obtain or perform. This will lead to having an experience of space as circumscribed by the drone's moving frame, within which we are.

#### **Lago Bullicante's case study**

Lago Bullicante is a naturalistic site within a densely populated and urbanized area, in the city of Rome. The area is the subject of a petition by environmental activists and grassroots actors, who want to protect its biodiversity against private interests. The activists are using different tools to both promote awareness around the area and denounce soil abuse – among them also images and videos from the drone.

The activists, in fact, documented abuses to the natural area of Lago Bullicante, by means of pictures and videos properly 'from above' - first with smartphones from the windows of their houses overlooking the park, and later with the help of a journalist who made his drone available to report on the events around the lake and its community. The images and videos captured by the drone not only offered a new perspective on the natural environment that the activists had been defending for years but gave greater prominence to the protest actions and to be able to document the actual impact of using concrete on the lake's vegetation.

This case study shows how the Bullicante Lake activists succeeded in pursuing their environmental claims against abuses, also using smart images and videos from above. They have exercised agency over the air space, re-appropriating it and somehow reversing the propriety relations in place – a process, however, not without criticalities.

#### **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have briefly highlighted some of the main elements that come into play, in the relationship between commercial drones, airspace, and users from a subjective and a collective point of view.

Regarding the first point, I highlighted how the condition of proximity, coordination, and, as an operator, the extension of the perception of territory in real-time, are the characterizing elements of this experience.

Again, but no less important, the inherent asymmetry of the drone is evident if one dresses in the shoes of the operator - who perceives the surrounding space from the top down - or the mere passerby - who experiences the drone's presence from the bottom up.

Regarding the second point, I have highlighted how the drone can indeed be a useful tool for claiming collective demands, appropriating the dimension of vertical space, and in so doing renegotiating power relations within social space.

		<p>These preliminary findings highlight the asymmetrical aspect embedded in the drone, on the one hand providing evidence of the power imbalances inherent in verticality, and on the other allowing experiences of the airspace by exercising forms of agency.</p> <p>These elements, which may apparently seem distant from each other, remind us how complex our daily experience of technology can be, and how much research is still needed to enquire about the specifics of the drone as a media.</p>
	<p>Jakub Nowak (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin)</p>	<p><b><i>Privacy, media practices, and digital citizenship in the age of platforms</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The paper’s goal is to reconstruct sociopolitical implications of privacy as the sphere of realizing citizen agency in datafied welfare states. By combining qualitative media sociology and cultural studies perspective in media research (Silverstone’s double articulation of media), it pursues the concept of privacy as media practices being one of the key aspects of datafied citizenship nowadays. Within this approach, privacy is reconstructed as the phenomenon that is pursued by broad repertoires of everyday, mundane media practices that are context-related, collective, and never fully achieved. In this light, privacy works as a lens exposing tensions of datafied societies and increasingly commodified democratic institutions: current understanding of citizenship is questioned with datafication processes and privacy concerns all four dimensions of citizenship – rights, duties, participation, and identity.</p> <p><b>Theoretical contexts</b></p> <p>In the wider perspective, datafication and digital mediatization of seemingly any aspect of people’s lives pose tremendous challenges to citizenship. In that respect, citizenship has been diversely theorized with encouraging accounts on cyberactivism, hacktivism and political online protests. These recognitions are counterbalanced by arguments on hampering aspects of datafication, including surveillance, commodification, and social profiling/sorting. Therefore, our current understandings of citizenship is questioned within broader transformations of citizen-state-corporate relations grounded in datafication processes of current cultures, politics, and economies. As citizenship usually denotes citizens creating and performing their role in society, digital citizenship is increasingly often ‘defined through people’s actions, rather than by their formal status of belonging to a nation-state and the rights and responsibilities that come with it’ (Hintz et al. 2017). Therefore, digital citizens are those who make digital rights claims: ‘to understand what it means to be digital citizens requires theorizing between digital life (and its digital subjects) and political life (and its political subjects). Both are simultaneously undergoing transformation, and ‘understanding the dynamics of these changes is a challenge’ (Isin &amp; Ruppert 2015).</p> <p>Privacy is among the phenomena of raising importance at this juncture and to examine digital citizenship is to ask how privacy is constructed nowadays: how it is understood, contextually negotiated, secured, and, not least, violated. In this regard, communication and media research offers a rich landscape of privacy research. Notions of privacy may differ along the question whether it is realized by individuals or within groups (Baruh &amp; Popescu 2017; Crowley 2017). Also, privacy research can focus primarily on norms (Regan 1995; Nissenbaum 2010) or practices (boyd &amp; Marwick 2011). Following these two dimensions, four general perspectives on privacy emerge and privacy literature mostly covers three of them: an individuum-norm based, an individuum-practice based, and a relation-norm based (for a more elaborate argument see: Möller &amp; Dogruel 2020). A fourth perspective, relational and practice-based, remains, so far, underdeveloped. As it has a potential for describing consequences of privacy-related media actions, it is used as the theoretical foundation for this paper. Here – within the media as practice approach – I perceive privacy as a set of practices: to do privacy is to make attempts to realize control over personal information flows in relation to activities of others (Nissenbaum 2010). Only a limited number</p>



of communication and media authors rely on privacy as media practices (see, for instance, Marwick & boyd, 2014; Kennedy et al. 2017). These accounts share the view that individuals have the potential to evaluate and design their own information boundary management. Privacy in datafied societies is, thus, collective, always contextual, and never fully achieved. Against this background, also the realms of cultural imaginaries of privacy and privacy-oriented practices are inherently tied (Lyon 2018) and together they comprise privacy as an everyday and mundane citizen practice. Therefore, the direct goal of the paper is to analyze these two interconnected aspects of digital citizenship: how privacy is approached (cultural imaginaries) and done (practices) by inherently collective citizen media practices performed in commodified, enclosed, and datafied environments. Reconstructing these imaginaries and practices, and matching distinctions within both with particular contexts (sociological characteristics of citizens, technologies used, communicative aims of particular situations, discourses enacted within them) help to find emerging patterns of how privacy is understood, evaluated, and how it is pursued: done and, at times, broken in the current, increasingly demanding, technological structures.

### **Methodology**

The project has a strong empirical foundation of qualitative methods divided into 2 research components: in-depth semi-structured interviews (IDI) with 30 activists working in the field of privacy and 12 focus groups (FGI) with 'ordinary citizens' (4-6 persons each). IDI are designed to reconstruct repertoires of privacy media practices performed by tech-savvy citizens and to reveal tensions of realizing citizen agency while being online. The interviewees' views and practices arguably differ from those realized by larger populations on an everyday basis. Their insight in the subject of the study, however, is crucial to recognize not only how privacy is understood, evaluated, or done by the most skilled, and politically aware, but also provides nuanced knowledge on tensions of how citizen agency is realized in datafied societies.

FGI are organized to reconstruct varied imaginaries and practices of privacy done by people of highly diverse sociological characteristics. The groups do not constitute a representative or statistically significant sample, they, however, represent a cross section of media users with divergent privacy imaginaries and practices. Each sample, yet, is considerably homogenous in some aspects to support to the principle of FGI composition that some homogeneity results in understanding of others' situations and so facilitates discussion (Krueger & Casey 2008). As privacy as the subject of study is ever-changing and context-related, FGI helps to understand gap between what people say and do as multiple explanations of their behavior are more readily articulated (Lankshear 1993). This research component is also designed to reconstruct privacy practices of people cooperating within organizational frameworks of varied density and flexibility - they are members of various, often overlapping, digitally mediatized networks. These networks are characterized by: various degrees of connections (dense/hierarchical networks of organizations and loose collectives); varying communication strategies towards beneficiaries/audiences; different communication tools and, presumably, different organizational imaginaries of privacy. Mutual interaction during FGI not only reconstructs how interviewees do their privacies in terms of personal/professional goals and how they approach it as members of these networks, but also to reveal privacy-related tensions, limitations, and modes of action rooted in particular technological environments in which they act as the 'networked'.

### **Outcomes' overview**

Theory-wise, media studies' insight on privacy as a collective and practice-based phenomenon is still underdeveloped, and, also, citizens' individual privacy strategies in datafied environments remain underresearched. In this regard, the paper addresses these gaps as privacy works as "the skeleton key" helping to learn more about datafied citizen agency. By seeking for answers with qualitative methods-based research, the project critically investigates how privacy is done by inherently

		<p>collective and contextual media practices, and, by this, contributes to learning the conditions, contexts, and practices of digital citizenship. The discussion includes 1) new tensions tied to platformization of education/work environments that escalate power-related pressures when privacy as citizen resource becomes increasingly vulnerable (class-related tensions; shortage of resources including hardware, space &amp; time; growing excess of power by tracking and desktime apps, etc.). 2) Various bottom-up citizen responses to datafication: how algorithms-driven visibility (as a new predominant norm, practice, resource) is addressed. Here, by drawing on the Raymond Williams concept of culture as a whole way of life, a new concept is introduced and discussed: self-exposure as a whole way of life being both a hegemonic norm and common practice when citizens' mediated visibility is ongoingly demanded, negotiated and compromised.</p>
	<p>Mateusz Sobiech (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin)</p>	<p><i>I have a sick note. Gamification and new technologies in the context of physical activity during PE Lessons</i></p> <p><b>PURPOSE</b></p> <p>The purpose of the paper is to present the results of research on the impact of gamification and new technologies on increasing children's activity during PE lessons. The author presents the possibilities, limitations, opportunities and risks of hybridization (Castells, 2011, p. 401) of movement activities in schools and describes reflections related to the potential shape of education in this dimension. The project is based on applied research, and while it is not the first of its kind (Hayes, 2022, pp. 14-21), it can provide a basis for redefining and transforming the form of physical education in schools. The purpose of the research focuses on developing an innovative model for conducting PE lessons based on new technologies and gamification. Achieving the purpose of the research enabled the author to answer a research questions, including: what forms of gamification and new technologies can contribute to increasing children's physical activity during PE lessons? What risks may arise from the partial transfer of PE to the virtual world?</p> <p><b>RESEARCH BACKGROUND</b></p> <p>Observing the modern way of fitness training, gym workouts or recreational (also professional) running, it can be said that they are largely done with the use of new technologies. This is especially true of smartwatches and smartphones. These devices perform several tasks during exercise. Among other things, they are carriers of music/audiobooks/podcasts, enable measurement of distance covered or monitoring of heart rate. In some Polish elementary schools in Poland, gym teachers do not give permission for children to exercise with smartwatches. On the one hand, this increases the safety of other lesson participants (especially in so-called contact sports), while on the other hand, it makes it impossible to control the number of steps taken, heart rate and the introduction of gamification during gym lessons. Nonetheless, in the context of modern physical culture, which is largely interspersed with interactive media, this prompts us to start a polemic on the validity of restricting access to smartwatches in PE lessons.</p> <p>Physical Education is the only curricular subject that combines the body and physical competence with value-based learning and communication that provides learning that is the gateway to developing the skills necessary for success in the 21st century (UNESCO, 2015, p. 15). In the cited definition, the term "21st century" is present, which is inextricably linked to the ubiquity with new technologies, smartphoneization (Czerska, 2016, pp. 214-215) and multi-level convergence (Kopecka-Piech, 2015) of not only the media, but also many other areas of life - including physical education. It seems, therefore, that modern PE lessons, which should cause an increase in children's interest in sports, should take place with the use of new technologies used in professional sports, among others. Observation and analysis of the discourse of physical education leads to the thesis that PE lessons are little changed from those that took place even at the dawn of the 20th century. Admittedly, sports infrastructure has been expanded in many schools, although this is still a problem in many places. According to a report</p>

on the state of physical activity of children and youth in Poland (Zembura, Korcz, Cieśla, Nałęcz, 2022, p. 20), 87% of students (in 2021) had access to outdoor sports facilities outside of lessons, while sports halls were available to only 69.6%.

According to Professor Anna Fijałkowska, the physical fitness of Polish children is deteriorating, and more and more of them are also obese (2021, pp. 69-90). As many as 88% of children in grades I-III can't perform a forward roll, 74% of children in grades IV-VI can't bat a ball, and 57% can't jump over a skipping rope (TVP Sport, 2023). In 1979, ten-year-olds were able to perform the overhang on a bar for 24 seconds, this is now only for eight seconds (Ibidem). On average, children used to perform the long jump from a standing position at a distance of 129 centimeters, now - only 100 centimeters. The same study found that nearly 20% of second-grade students exhibit first- or second-degree hypertension. This problem underscores the fact of the important role that PE lessons play in the maturation of children. The results of the studies cited above tend to support the thesis that today's children are far more vulnerable to health problems due to low physical activity than their peers living in the last millennium.

#### **METHODS**

The research is based primarily on analysis of individual in-depth interviews. Interlocutors were gym teachers, children and their parents. The author conducted 12 interviews: 4 with teachers, 4 with children (2 boys and 2 girls) and 4 with parents. The selection of interviewees was done through a purposive-random method. The categorization key is based on geographic selection and place of residence. Interviews were conducted with people from 4 different parts of Poland and from 4 different villages of towns with different populations. Issues discussed with the interlocutors included indicating what types of sports would increase the attractiveness of PE classes, what forms of gamification would increase interest in participating in these lessons, and focused on the possibilities of using new technologies in conducting PE classes.

In formulating the questions, the author consulted with professional sports coaches from a leading sports club in Poland in order to, among other things, determine how new technologies are used in the process of developing training plans for professional soccer players. In addition, in order to systematize knowledge and deepen the findings, the author conducted an anonymous survey of students, the results of which indicated the reasons for their lack of interest in participating in PE classes.

#### **RESULTS**

The results of the study allowed us to find answers to the research questions posed about the forms and ways of implementing gamification and new technologies during PE lessons. Based on them, it should be concluded that most of the surveyed children are more motivated by the system of earning rewards for achievements (i.e. gamification) than by direct competition with peers. Some children prefer challenges in which they compete against themselves (e.g., trying to break their own records) rather than against friends who are taller, stronger, faster, etc.

Interviews with physical education teachers indicate prospects for introducing new technologies into PE lesson plans. Some of them showed a desire to evolve the lessons they teach, but stressed the limitations related to access to adequate infrastructure in the first place. The results of the research allowed the development of an initial concept for modernizing PE lessons. The author stresses that they were, however, of a pilot nature and hopes that they are only a prelude to conducting a more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon. To this end, he points out, among other things, the direction of internationalized interdisciplinary research during which the comparative method and the exchange of experiences of researchers from different cultural backgrounds and countries with different educational systems would be extremely important.

	<p>Tomasz Gackowski (University of Warsaw); Grzegorz Kowalczyk (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Rebellion or fun? #GME Short Squeeze as a social media revolution through capital market</i></b></p> <p>At the end of January 2021, Reddit users on r/wallstreetbets seemed to organize one of the most epic short squeezes in capital market history on GameStop stock, pushing up the stock price by almost 30 times (using technical imbalance in the market, e.g., enormous short interest, small free-floating shares, call options leverage). This action triggered a comment from Citron Research (a hedge fund), predicting the stock value would decrease. Instead, the stock price increased many times, and its high volatility caused trading to be halted multiple times. What is most important is the fact that this short squeeze appears to establish a new (old – vide: Occupy Wall Street Movement) narrative of a great (not only symbolic) battle between Main Street vs. Wall Street, retail investors, everyday hard-working people vs. professional traders, hedge fund managers, capital dodgers in which the former ones finally became the victors in the end. In this paper, the authors will present the results of conducted discourse analysis on memes used by internet users – retail investors to define what happened and how they want to perceive this event. Do we witness a revolution in the capital market through social media? Power to the people – from Wall Street’s dodgers in ties to Main Street’s retail traders?</p> <p>The rich and varied symbolism of memes associated with the community confirms the findings of other studies that humour plays a crucial role in promoting group cohesion and providing a place for participants to seek mutual support in the form of vulgar but good-natured derision. The researchers concluded that this chaotic, often offensive community had created one of the platform's largest and most loyal user bases. The conclusions of the present study also confirm these observations.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the memes used by WSB participants, on the one hand, constitute and reinforce an internal community based on a commonality of experience. For the regular participants of the group, their message seems obvious. On the other hand, however, they use specialized vocabulary and insider slang, which can ensure the group's exclusivity. This phenomenon begs the question of how much memes integrate subsequent participants into the communication community and how much they testify to the group's distinctiveness.</p>
19.00	Conference Banquet Column Hall (Sala Kolumnowa), Faculty of History, 26/28 Krakowskie Przedmieście St.	

# Program 15.03

Location: Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Warsaw, 55 Dobra St.

08:30-09:00	<b>Welcome Reception and Registration</b>	
09.00 -11.00	<p><b>Keynote Speeches (Auditorium)</b>  <b>Aleksandra Przegalińska</b> (Kozminski University, HumanRace Research Center, Poland): <i>The Future of Artificial Intelligence in Education and Business: Challenges and Opportunities</i>  <b>Wayne Wanta</b> (University of Florida, United States): <i>Social Media and Political Communication: What Theories Tell Us about Potential Effects on the Public</i></p>	
11.00-11.30	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
11.30-13.00	<p><b>2.1 COVID-19 Pandemic: Populism, Misinformation and Polarization*</b>  <b>Chairs: Magdalena Hodalska, Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska</b>             Auditorium</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p><i>Beata Klimkiewicz (Jagiellonian University); Katarzyna Vanevska (Jagiellonian University); Sabina Mihelj (Loughborough University); Daniel Hallin (University of California); Danilo Rothberg (Unesp (São Paulo State University)); Václav Štětka (Loughborough University); Nithyanand Rao; Paulo Ferracioli (Federal University of Paraná); Ana Stojiljković (Loughborough University); Francisco Brandão</i></p>	<p><b><i>More Control than Support: Populism, The Covid-19 Pandemic and Media Policies in USA, Brasil, Serbia and Poland</i></b>            The Covid-19 pandemic had a profound impact on public communication, media performance and conditions under which the news media function. The end of the Covid-19 emergency announced globally by WHO and nationally by many governments in May 2023 has not automatically lifted long-term consequences that will continue to define post-Covid social and political realities. The aim of this paper is to examine the role of populist governments in shaping actions and structures of the media during the period of 2020 – 2023. In other words, the question is: to what extent and how populism has manifested in media policies adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic in four countries: USA, Brasil, Serbia and Poland. The comparative analysis of media policies in four studied areas – fundamental rights, economic conditions, disinformation and PSM - has shown that the chosen policies did not demonstrate a clear divide between an erratic and denialist approach performed by maverick leaders in Brasil and US and a more technocratic approach adopted by populist governments in Poland and Serbia. In other words, media policies seemed not to be very closely linked to the ways how the pandemic was handled in general, but rather revolved around dynamics between an attempt to control pandemic communication and media access to public information, and support for media as economic institutions or journalists more generally. Particularly in the area of fundamental rights, similarities between the countries seemed strikingly evident. In general, governments took weak actions or turn a blind eye on cases of infringements of media freedoms or threats to journalists. In Brasil, president Bolsonaro even encouraged his supporters to attack journalists. In Serbia and Poland journalists were arrested or detained by the police while doing their work. Another important commonality manifested in attempts to limit access to information or introduction of new restrictions concerning pandemic communication. In the US, the Trump</p>

administration introduced Guidelines to the HIPAA Privacy Rule, which made it virtually impossible for the media to report on the crisis from inside hospitals. In both, Brasil and Poland, transitory bills were introduced that enabled to suspend access to public information. In both cases however, the laws were challenged by relevant courts, which showed that counterweights in power proved immensely important. In Brasil, this balancing role was played by both states' administration and municipalities as well as the Supreme Federal Court, in Poland by the Commissioner for Human Rights and the courts. In the US – by the Congress (particularly with regard to the investigative role of The Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis) and in Serbia by professional institutions such as NUNS.

As regards similarities detected in the area of economic conditions – these reflected a general approach to support minimally media experiencing economic hardship. None of the countries decided to implement media-specific support schemes, and media used selective support measures (most often employment compensation) envisaged for all industry sectors. In the area of counteracting disinformation, none of the countries introduced regulation targeting content with Covid-19 disinformation or that questioning vaccination or other preventive policies. Moreover, systemic and comprehensive (including proactive) policies combating disinformation were generally missing. Again, these shortcomings were mitigated by other institutional actors: an active role of state administration in Brasil, and NGO, factchecking and research communities particularly in Poland and US. Covid-19 content policies (mainly targeting and removing disinformation) were implemented by all major platforms in the US, Brasil and Poland (in Poland platforms followed EU co-regulatory guidelines) at the beginning of the pandemic, while in Serbia they had a limited scale. In some cases, these led to clashes between platforms and populist leaders or governments. For example in the US over suspension of Donald Trump posts and accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, in Brasil on suspension of Bolsonaro live broadcasts by You Tube or in Poland over banishment of Konfederacja's account on Facebook and wRealu24 TV on You Tube. Finally, in comparison with other media undergoing economic hardships and uncertainties, the position of PSM remained relatively stable. PSM has certainly played and continues to play different roles in national media systems studied in this paper, yet the surrounding conditions encouraged its institutional stability. The funding from similar sources slightly increased in all of the countries and no fundamental changes affected modes of the PSM governance. The table below compares similarities and differences in four studied areas.

When it comes to differences, these are visible for example in addressing economic conditions of the media. In Poland, populist government of Law and Justice party used the pandemic to push through ownership takeover of Polska Press – a dominant regional press publisher - by a state-controlled oil group Orlen. In both Poland and Brasil, distribution of state advertising, including Covid-19 campaigns, followed political lines and favored pro-government media. One of the major differences played out also in an approach to disinformation: populist leaders in USA and Brasil – Donal Trump and Jair Bolsonaro – took their lead in spreading Covid-19 disinformation. And as observed by Philip Napoli (2020), in both these cases, health misinformation and political misinformation were “essentially converging” what ultimately raised questions about the use of Covid-19 content policies and suppressing political speech. In Serbia and Poland, the populist governments figured out at some point that ideological limitations might prove counterproductive. President Vucić withdrew the act he endorsed in order to centralise control over public information and Polish public television was reprimanded for a vaccine-skeptical programme. Finally, the PSM's role in pandemic coverage varied across the countries and reflected at a more general level its editorial autonomy. For example, PSM enjoying relative editorial independence in the US offered a moderate pandemic coverage in line with scientific accounts. On the other hand, PSM in Brasil largely supported a pro-Bolsonaro perspective on the pandemic, upholding misinformative claims.

		<p>In summary, this study has shown that a comparison of media policies has not brought clear-cut differences and similarities that would result in grouping examined countries into separate categories parallel to those of “mishandling” and “effectively handling” the pandemic. There seems to be no one single media policy playbook used by populist leaders and governments in times of health crisis. Nor have media policies played out as strategies instrumental in overall handling of the pandemic. Rather, the principal dynamics oscillated between control and support: on the one hand, media policies were designed to control the access to information, on the other hand support for media and quality journalism. How far populist leaders and governments went in completing these ends very much depended on counterbalancing power of other institutions, safeguards and a national context. Yet ultimately, the drive to control proved to be much more prevalent and common than the drive to support.</p>
	<p>Vaclav Stetka (Loughborough University); Sabina Mihelj (Loughborough University); Francisco Brandao (Loughborough University); Daniel Hallin (University of San Diego); Danilo Rothberg (Unesp - Universidade Estadual Paulista); Paulo Ferracioli (Unesp - Universidade Estadual Paulista); Beata Klimkiewicz (Jagiellonian University)</p>	<p><b><i>The impact of populism and pandemic misinformation on institutional trust in comparative perspective</i></b></p> <p><b>Study purpose</b> Trust in institutions has a paramount importance for the management of a public crisis, influencing effective crisis communication of advices and guidelines from organizations (Coombs &amp; Holladay, 2002), encouraging compliance with crisis-related measures (Bargain &amp; Aminjonov, 2020), enhancing social cohesion and engagement (Aldrich &amp; Meyer, 2015; Paton, 2007), or encouraging investments vital to economic recovery (Uslaner, 2010). Securing or maintaining public trust was crucial during the Covid-19 pandemic, when governments and authorities had to adopt unprecedented measures with high conformity costs to mitigate the impact of the disease. This was particularly challenging in countries with populist leaders who have been known to obstruct the capacity of public health organizations to engage in effective health crisis communication – a task made even more complicated due to the widespread dissemination of misinformation. The paper seeks to make important contributions to the study of institutional trust, by filling out several existing gaps in the literature. First, this paper assesses presumed long-term effects of the pandemic on public trust, by focusing on expectations about a new pandemic in the future. Second, the research adopts a comparative, multi-country approach to institutional trust, bringing to light the importance of local context in countries ruled by populist presidents. Third, the models are built around trust as a dependent variable, rather than an independent one, deviating thereby from the mainstream approach in the literature. Finally, we disentangle different types of institutional trust (political and expert) and their different causes.</p> <p><b>Conceptual framework and hypotheses</b> According to literature, political trust is most critical to regimes facing periods of crisis, like economic recession or external shocks (Norris, 1999). When setting up the defence against a life-threatening disease, governments need public trust to effectively adopt and reinforce the necessary health policies. Such policies could, in turn, contribute to positive perceptions of performance and thereby help build institutional trust. However, the implementation of these policies could also intensify divisive politics and power struggles, especially in countries with high political polarization and populist actors in power, and thereby undermine trust.</p> <p>Existing scholarship has produced a growing body of research about the relationships between institutional trust and the coronavirus pandemic. Most studies have focused on institutional trust as an independent variable (Devine et al., 2021), seeking to assess the effects of public trust during the pandemic on a range of areas, including compliance with government measures, risk perception, or levels of mortality (Cairney &amp; Wellstead, 2021; Caplanova et al., 2021; Drykurst et al., 2020; Han et al, 2021; Goldstein &amp; Wiedemann, 2022; Vu, 2021). Very few papers, however, have investigated trust as a dependent variable, and what are the consequences of the pandemic for trust. The majority of those studies observe positive effects on</p>

institutional trust associated with expectations about how governments handle the pandemic, competence and adequacy of the measures, or perceptions of good governance (Bromme et al., 2020; Falcone et al., 2020; Mansoor, 2021). Drawing on this scholarship, our first hypothesis therefore assumes that:

H1: Support for government's measures against Covid-19 will increase political and expert trust.

Our second hypothesis conceptually draws upon the relationship between public trust and populism. While political distrust is commonly treated as one of the factors that facilitate the growth of populism, the relationship is in fact circular, as populism further contributes to the erosion of trust in other institutions. Populist voters are susceptible to conspiracy theories and tend to distrust any unelected institution that limits the power of the demos (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Exploiting the erosion of public trust, populist leaders seek political gains by attacking the trustworthiness of expert bodies that are vulnerable to distrust (Eberl et al., 2021; Hamilton Safford, 2021). Our hypothesis therefore asserts that:

H2: Populist attitudes and voting for a populist candidate will decrease political trust.

Misinformation can also be seen as a contributing factor to the levels of trust. The new, high choice information environment (Van Aelst et al., 2017) has been linked with the rise and fast spreading of false information, rumours and conspiracy theories, challenging expertise and threatening as a consequence the implementation of science based public policies (Levy et al., 2021). However, existing research on the relationship between political trust and misinformation is inconclusive, which is why we pose a research question to explore it, rather than a directional hypothesis:

RQ1: What is the effect of beliefs in false information on trust in political and expert institutions?

Finally, scholarship has suggested that exposure to news media can have effects on public trust; however, the direction of the effect has been far from unanimous (Ceron, 2015; Strömbäck et al., 2015; Evans & Hargittai, 2020; Au et al., 2020). This is why our RQ2 reads

RQ2: What is the effect of news consumption on trust in political and expert institutions?

### **Methodology**

Our study is designed as a comparative one, examining four countries, which were all led by populist leaders during the time of the pandemic – Brazil, Poland, Serbia, and the United States – using data from a cross-sectional survey with nationally representative samples (N= 5,000, collected online between November-December 2022). These countries were selected based on fundamental differences in crisis communication and public health policies (Barberia & Gómez, 2020; Daniels, 2021; Guasti, 2020; Ortega & Orsini, 2020; Peci et al., 2021; Petrović, 2020). While government officials in Brazil and the United States promoted numerous coronavirus-related conspiracy theories, constantly challenging healthcare and expert institutions, Poland and Serbia observed more strict public health measures, in accordance with expert institutions.

Institutional trust was measured by two different dependent variables: political trust and expert trust. Each variable was based on the question: "If there is a new pandemic in the future, to which extent would you trust following institutions to handle it?" The answers were recorded on a 1-10 scale.

Trust in political institutions was a latent variable composing three different institutions: President, Federal or National Government and State or Local Government (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.9$  for ALL; 0.86 for BR; 0.88 for PL; 0.93 for RS; 0.93 for the U.S.) Likewise, trust in expert institutions was composed of three items, too: public health authorities, scientists and medical professionals (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.9$  for ALL; 0.86 for BR; 0.9 for PL; 0.89 for RS; 0.92 for the U.S.).

Support for public policies was based on an index of six government measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, namely (1) mandatory wearing of masks or face coverings in public; (2) requirements for social distancing, or staying 6 ft from others;



		<p>(3) period of self-isolation for those testing positive; (4) temporary closure of schools, businesses and other areas of public life; (5) stay-at-home policies that discouraged people from gathering with others outside their households; (6) nationwide vaccination program.</p> <p>To assess beliefs in misinformation, respondents declared their agreement or disagreement with 9 statements about the Covid-19 pandemic, preventive measures and vaccines, which are known to be true or false.</p> <p>To measure populist attitudes, we used a list of eight questions based on Hauwaert and Kassel (2017) and Hauwaert et al. (2019). Populist vote was a dummy variable in which 1 was equivalent to voting in the last presidential election.</p> <p>For news access, the survey asked about self-reported frequency of accessing news (across different platforms), on a 1-9 scale.</p> <p><b>Preliminary Findings</b></p> <p>The data shows that, in all countries, respondents display greater trust in experts than in political institutions. On average, the level of institutional trust is higher in Brazil and the United States, and lower in Poland and Serbia. The same trend is noted with support for government measures against the pandemic, which is higher in Brazil and the United States, and lower in Poland and Serbia. However, the relationship is different for misinformation beliefs. Respondents made more mistakes on the misinformation test in Poland and Serbia, and on average believed in fewer false statements about the pandemic in Brazil and the United States.</p> <p>A structural equation model with the pooled data from all countries confirms that policy support is the strongest predictor for both political trust (beta = 0.71) and expert trust (beta = 0.87). Populist attitudes have a strong negative effect on political trust (<math>\beta = 0.36</math> and a smaller one in expert trust (<math>\beta = 0.10</math>). On the other hand, misinformation and populist vote have different relationships with each dimension of institutional trust. Misinformation increases trust in politics (<math>\beta = 0.2</math>) but decrease trust in decrease trust in experts (experts (<math>\beta = -0.21</math>). In the same way, populist voters tend to trust more in politics (in politics (<math>\beta = 0.30</math>) but are distrustful of are distrustful of experts (<math>\beta = -0.22</math>). News access has a small positive effect on expert trust (<math>\beta = 0.12</math>), but no significant effect on political trust.</p> <p>The preliminary findings demonstrate that countries with populist governments can present different conditions to build institutional trust during periods of crisis than what would be expected in stable democracies. The paper will further discuss the impact of local context on the differences between individual countries.</p>
	<p>Ana Stojiljković (Loughborough University); Sabina Mihelj (Loughborough University); Francisco Brandão (University of California); Paulo Ferracioli (Federal University of Paraná); Daniel Hallin (University of California); Beata Klimkiewicz (Jagiellonian University); Nityanand Rao</p>	<p><b><i>Pandemic communication and populism during the COVID-19 pandemic: Comparing Brazil, Poland, Serbia and the United States</i></b></p> <p>Media serve as important sources of information about health, and their role increases during public health crises. We know that the way media present information during a health crisis can have a significant impact on public attitudes and behaviour; it can encourage compliance with public health measures, or alternatively saw division and distrust (Van Bavel et al., 2020). The presence of populist leaders can arguably obstruct the capacity of communication professionals to engage in effective health crisis communication and hinder public compliance with preventative measures (Hedges and Lasco, 2021). Populism thrives on divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ – especially between ‘the people’ and ‘elites’ (e.g., Moffitt, 2022) – and can contribute to public distrust of elites. Yet, existing research pays very limited attention to the impact of populist politics on pandemic communication.</p> <p>This paper addresses this gap by drawing on the data collected as part of the ongoing comparative research project Pandemic Communication in Times of Populism (PANCOPOP), which examines health crisis communication in the context of populist</p>

*(University of California);  
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Paulo State University));  
Katarzyna Vanevska  
(Jagiellonian University);  
Václav Štětka  
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politics. The focus is on four countries that were led by populist leaders, and which capture different types of populist responses to the pandemic: Brazil, Poland, Serbia, and the USA (cf. Meyer, 2020; Kishner Garadian at al. 2022). A qualitative case study method is used to enable in-depth analysis, drawing on semi-structured interviews with key individuals involved in the process of pandemic communication, including public health officials and other health professionals who played important roles at the time, communication offices in government institutions, political leaders and journalists who covered the pandemic. Between 14 and 20 individuals were involved in each country, which is consistent with accepted practice in qualitative research; namely, the fact that between 6 and 20 interviews are thought to provide sufficient basis to reach saturation and thematic exhaustion (e.g., Guest et al, 2006). The interviews were complemented by secondary materials, including published memoirs and interviews as well as relevant public reports.

The paper first outlines a range of characteristics typically associated with populist governance and populist political culture which are likely to affect pandemic communication, including polarization, cultural populism and hostility to expertise, personalized rule and machismo, illiberalism, and the performance of crisis. When analysing the data, we focused on establishing whether and to what extent the processes of pandemic communication during the crisis were indeed affected by these features. The analysis confirmed that many of these features were evident in processes of communication in all four countries, but also revealed significant differences, especially between Brazil and the United States on the one hand, and Poland and Serbia on the other hand.

Personalized rule and machismo – and the associated attempts by populist leaders to control processes of communication – were prominent in Brazil, Serbia and the U.S. Polarization – a recognizable characteristic of populist rule – was present in all four countries, but its timing differed considerably; in Serbia and Poland, populist leaders temporarily abandoned their usual divisive strategies during the first wave of the pandemic, but then resorted to them again in the run-up to elections (which occurred in both countries in June 2020). In contrast, Trump and Bolsonaro continued with their usual polarizing strategies throughout. Another feature present in all four countries, closely linked with polarization, was Othering, although the targets differed: in Brazil and the United States, presidents blamed the pandemic on China; Trump also used the pandemic to impose additional restrictions on immigration, while Polish leaders resorted to the common strategy of blaming the European Union for inadequate pandemic measures. However, in Brazil and the United States, polarization involving such attacks on external others was overshadowed by polarizing strategies that involved attacks on internal enemies – experts and public health officials in Brazil, and partisan opponents in the United States. Finally, illiberalism was to an extent present in all four countries but differed considerably in forms and extent. It was much more evident in Poland and Serbia, especially in the way preventative measures were enforced. In Brazil and the United States, illiberalism was primarily present in attacks on the opposition and attempts to exert political control over public health officials.

Apart from these similarities, prominent differences were present as well, and particularly evident in the response to the crisis. Populist leaders often rely on a rhetoric or performance of crisis to foster polarization and justify regulatory changes or governance strategies that contravene democratic norms (Moffitt 2016). However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, populist leaders were faced by an externally generated crisis that were expected to manage and respond to. The leaders of the four countries respond to this situation in rather different way. On the one hand, as noted earlier, leaders in Poland and Serbia took the pandemic seriously, and presented themselves as defenders of the nation against the threat of the virus. At the same time, they also took advantage of the crisis to push through illiberal measures or accomplish other political goals. On the other hand, Trump and Bolsonaro refused to take the threat seriously, challenged expert assessments of the significance and

		<p>potential damage brought by the virus, and instead continued with their usual populist polarizing strategies, resorting to the binary of the people vs. the elite, and presenting experts and political opponents as enemies of the people.</p> <p>We conclude the paper by considering possible explanations for these differences and reflect on the implications these findings have for health crisis communication and management of health emergencies in the future.</p> <p><b>Acknowledgement</b></p> <p>This research was funded in whole or in part by UK Research and Innovation – Economic and Social Research Council, UK (grant reference ES/X000702/1), São Paulo Research Foundation, Brasil (grant reference 2021/07344-3), National Science Foundation, USA (grant reference 2223914), and National Science Centre, Poland (Grant number: 2021/03/Y/HS6/00163), under the Trans-Atlantic Platform RRR Call 2021. The authors also wish to acknowledge the support of the institute for Advanced Studies, Loughborough University. All opinions, conclusions and recommendations included in this material are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funding bodies.</p>
	<p><i>Katarzyna Solarczyk (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin); Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin)</i></p>	<p><b><i>Absolutely for or absolutely against. Polarized views of the pandemic reality and the role of social media in shaping them</i></b></p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media provided an environment for constructing discourse on the pandemic (Gupta et al 2023; Khan et al 2022; Pascual-Ferrá 2021). Politicians, journalists, celebrities, medics, and government bodies were important creators, giving direction to the online public debate (White et al 2023; Zhanget al 2023). Social media posts were the basis for the formation of views and beliefs that formed separate, often mutually exclusive narratives on the pandemic. These differences led to divisions among Internet users in the way they perceived many of the threads concerning the pandemic. Government actions, such as sanitary restrictions and medical measures put in place, have proven to be contentious (Al-Ramahi et al 2021).</p> <p>Communication through social networks provided an opportunity to reduce the time it took to report on epidemiological developments and, consequently, emergency response (Wu et al 2021). At the same time, the infrastructure of social networks facilitated the spread of disinformation (Schillinger et al 2010; Tand et al 2018). Gossip, the spread of panic and the trivialization of crisis circumstances can pose a serious problem in countering a crisis (Guo et al 2023; Radwan et al 2020). In such scenarios, social media create a communication environment with an excess of inaccurate and even contradictory messages that may be inadvertently or deliberately propagated by individuals and groups. At the same time, the decline in trust in authoritative media outlets, such as the mainstream media, is resulting in increased observability and the proliferation of channels with antagonistic content. Alternative and opposition media to the public one are often considered their "corrective". They are described by their followers as "free," and through their diversity are better able to represent their worldview (Boberg et al 2020).</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the political space also (Santamaria 2021; Wang et al 2022). Both ruling and opposition parties took the floor in the debate on various aspects of health and security, as well as economics. For the opposition parties in particular, it was an opportunity to outline their views, to ensure that they follow the ideals and principles they profess, and to gain new supporters. The most extreme stances in Poland were presented by two groups from opposite political directions: The Confederation of Freedom and Independence; and the Left. Confederation politicians during the pandemic manifested their objections to pandemic restrictions, and even questioned the legitimacy of imposing an epidemic state, claiming that there was no real threat to take such steps. Left-wing politicians, on the other hand, believed that the government's actions were not radical enough, proposing to tighten restrictions and make vaccination universally mandatory.</p>

In this context, it appears important to determine 1) if and possibly how polarization due to divisions related to political preferences is occurring in the emerging adult population and 2) what is the role of social media in modeling the pandemic discourse. The focus of the study was on four key contentious issues: 1) the order to cover mouths and noses in public spaces; 2) the legitimacy of introducing and maintaining lockdowns; 3) vaccination; and 4) maintaining social distance.

#### **Methods**

In the course of individual in-depth interviews, opinions were obtained from a cohort of young adults on the messages conveyed by public opinion leaders. For this purpose, an interview scenario was used, enriched with materials posted on Facebook and YouTube, regarding the sanitary regime during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as vaccination against the Sars-CoV-2 virus.

The study group consists of 6 men and 6 women aged 18-26, living in Poland. The selection for the cohort was purposive. Half of the respondents declared left-wing views, half right-wing. Respondents were recruited on Facebook based on their activity in discussion groups sympathetic to the politicians of the right or left site.

The research used a voluntary, anonymous, open-ended, individual, oral interview. The interviews took place online via communication platforms: Discord, Skype, MS Teams.

The scenario was constructed based on separate thematic categories. It consisted of open-ended questions and 16 illustrative materials, i.e. printscreens of posts and videos published on Facebook and YouTube in the 20.04.2020-21.02.2022 period. The selection of materials was dictated by the topics of 1) covering one's mouth and nose in public space, 2) maintaining social distance, 3) approaches to COVID-19 vaccination, and 4) the introduction of economic blockades called lockdown; as well as the principle of symmetry: both sides, for and against, were represented by one of the materials on each issue.

The research was conducted in Poland between July 20-27, 2022, which was the period of the ongoing epidemic state in Poland. The interviews lasted from 38 to 63 minutes, on average 52,5 minutes. The entire interviews were recorded, transcribed and then subjected to thematic analysis.

#### **Results**

The study conducted showed that respondents who ideologically identified with the right wing most often identified the sanitary restrictions introduced as a restriction of their freedom. By this they meant: violation of freedom of speech, restriction of freedom of movement, restriction of personal freedoms (order to cover mouth and nose with a protective mask, forced vaccination), restriction of consumer freedoms (temporary inability to use services and commerce during the lockdown). They spoke unfavorably of state control over compliance with the restrictions. Respondents with right-wing views for the most part, agreed with the statements of those with identical views. Right-wing respondents also most often expressed agreement with the statements of opinion leaders who have long preached such opinions. Respondents with right-wing views, for the most part, also agreed with the demands of the Association of Independent Doctors and Scientists' Appeal. They were more likely to trust the independent medical group than the Ministry of Health, supporting communication opposite to the mainstream narrative.

Respondents declaring left-wing beliefs most often supported state interventionism on the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic. They believed that the decisions made by the government are aimed at ensuring the safety of citizens. They often indicated in their statements that safety and health were greater values for them than individual freedom. They also believed that the government should take far more radical steps as countries that have introduced mandatory vaccination and total lockdown have done. They were willing to support the introduction of mandatory vaccination, i.e. the introduction of regulations to

		<p>enforce it by the state against citizens. Respondents identifying with left-wing beliefs, for the most part, agreed with the statements of those in line with their own . It can be noted that left-leaning respondents were most likely to support messages that put safety and health issues first, so they mostly agreed with posts made by ambassadors for the National Vaccine Program and urged compliance with the sanitation regime. They also mostly supported government campaigns implemented by the Health Ministry that promoted adherence to government restrictions.</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions</p> <p>The research conducted provided a broader view of the COVID-19 pandemic discourse and opinions. Respondents, in addition to speaking on the studied aspects themselves, raised many side threads that revealed a complex and more complete picture of this slice of pandemic reality.</p> <p>Given the fundamental role of the state as an entity in control in situations that require decision-making affecting the general public, the political sphere was of greatest importance. The opposition agreed on one thing - the current governments were making unfavorable decisions. The right-wing opposition argued that the sanitary restrictions being introduced were far too moronic and detrimental to individual freedom, while the left-wing opposition considered them not radical enough. The Internet, including social media, became a battlefield between these opposing beliefs. Users of the social media took an active part in virtual discussions about the pandemic and were eager to comment on the actions carried out by the government, creating a polarized discourse (Gupta et al 2023; Jiang et al 2021; Jafarinejad et al 2021).</p> <p>The results of the study show that there is a strong correlation between the political views of respondents and their point of view on messages about the pandemic. The study also highlighted the correlation of the creation of most contradictory narratives around the COVID-19 pandemic in social media. According to the right-wing public activists, the pandemic may have been planned, and any means of combating it, such as sanitary restrictions, was an action against the freedom of citizens. Left-wing activists, on the other hand, portrayed the pandemic as an unpredictable emergency that requires compliance with government recommendations and the implementation of increasingly radical solutions, which are the domain of civilization-developed democratic states.</p> <p>The results of the empirical study also proved that social media play a significant role in the process of social polarization of the emerging adult population in terms of perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic i.e. on the issues of the order to cover the mouth and nose in public spaces; the introduction and maintenance of lockdown; the issue of vaccination and the maintenance of social distance. At the same time, they confirm respondents in their political views and information bubbles.</p>
*Organized in cooperation with CEECOM / ECREA CEE Network		
11.30-13.00	<p><b>2.2 Artificial Intelligence: Another Tool or a Game-Changing Factor?</b>  <b>Chairs: Silvio Waisbord, Marcin Łaczyński</b></p> <p>Room 1.120</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>

Alicja Waszkiewicz Raviv  
(University of Warsaw);  
Agnieszka Marzęda  
(University of Warsaw)

***The reception of AI impact on an image. The visual promotional messages of the university and its perceived outcomes through the lenses of Vilém Flusser theory***

Impact of digital technologies and machines on media consumption is undisputable (Fleming, Lukaszewicz-Alcaraz 2018, Natale, 2021). AI to refer broadly are the computational systems that involve algorithms, machine learning methods, and other techniques that operate on behalf of an individual to improve and enhance a communication outcome (Hancock, Naaman, Levy, 2020). The concept of medium is challenged by contemporary human-machine communication (HMC), as the machine assumes the dual role of both conduit and generator of communication messages. The present-day audience utilizes social media and computer-generated technology, demonstrating varying levels of digital competencies. People's expectations and attitude toward AI shift observed in communication differ (Moore, Hubscher, 2022). This paper focus on the marketing and PR aspect of the observable trends and the recipient's reactions.

Organizations use computer-generated images in their communication with publics and media (Aiello, Parry, 2019). Visuality is one of the modalities where AI solutions may enhance communication (Treem, Leonardi, van den Hooff, 2020). These trends do not omit educational institutions including universities. But what is the young audience attitude to such messages? This papers presents empirical study, that is online survey, among students (N=195), the target group of the newly implemented promotional campaign s of one of the leading Polish universities in fall 2023. The graphics generated by the artificial intelligence were intentionally designed and explicitly labelled for the purpose of promoting specific university in Poland. Graphics show computer generated artificial students encouraging everybody to be like them and study at the university. The paper shows student's reactions to this promotional images, especially their cognitive, emotional and behavioral declarations. The students that took part in the survey were the possible recipients of such campaign as they were the first year students for just one month. The results are preliminary and show more acceptance on the cognitive dimension and reluctance within the affective one. Means, that students understand the creative concept using AI to depict them, but do not feel moved by it nor positively attracted.

However, with regional scope and small scale of gathered data, the paper will be addressing wider problem of the cultural changes taking place in the 'information age' and the 'age of images'. Classic technological determinism seems to be outdated in the context of recent changes in the media sphere where the new generation of online users "think" with/through cyber images and not only control them as tools for individual psychologically rooted image creation. The digital social constructivism might be the recommended methodological inclination to analyze ongoing media phenomena. The classic author foreseeing those trends within media studies theory was Vilém Flusser. His term "imaginators" might be useful to describe contemporary "digital communicator". It's the person that possess not only features of creativity and technological freedom stemming from digital competences, but also visual imagination that rests on specialist's ability to play with and 'outwit' our own 'telematic systems' or 'apparatuses'. Flusser anticipated that the use of language, linear communication would become inadequate for the analysis of media concepts, given that contemporary society exists within a dimensionless realm characterised by technical imagery. Those AI images, so often created by the marketing and PR specialists are so persuasive that they brought back the magical feeling of making the abstract things concrete and 'real'. However, our study shows that the artificial images representing exactly the target group, with the intention to reflect them, are seen as odd and confusing. Presented study contribute to the both practical and theoretical discussion on persuasive dimension of AI enhanced marketing visual communication.

Caja Thimm (University of Bonn)

## ***(Dis)Trust in Automated and Autonomous Systems: Selected Exposure and Trust in Technology***

### **Introduction**

There is broad understanding in human centered AI research that one of the most important features of near-future AIs is their capacity to behave in a friendly and trustworthy manner to humans. Another uncontested assumption is that as AI technologies get increasingly advanced, they will be embedded in the fabric of society and, hence, need to reflect social realities, values, norms and preferences. In brief – they need to be contextualized and culturally adapted. This reflects on all contextual parameters of the situation, and language - from first degree automation until fully fledged autonomous systems. Even more so, as many human-to-human contacts will be replaced by interactions with machines and, if those machines are not programmed to be friendly, culturally sensitive and norm based (“Social AI”) and don’t behave in an acceptable, competent and trustworthy manner (“Friendly AI”), they won’t be accepted.

At the end of 2022, the text-based AI developed by OpenAI, known as “ChatGPT”, was released as a free version, significantly impacting the digital world. It not only revolutionized the digital landscape with its simple, globally accessible user interface but also surprised even staunch AI skeptics with its interactive capabilities. In a short period, such generative AI models (LGAIMs) have transformed the way we communicate, illustrate, and do research (Farrokhnia et al., 2023). And consequently, they have an influence on how we perceive information, on how journalists work (Pavlik, 2023; Opdahl et al., 2023) and on the public sphere. Current challenges include issues like discriminatory or biased responses, including so-called “hallucinated” results, where the AI generates content and even defends it upon further inquiry.

Rapid responses have been observed not only in the business sector but also in education to address and regulate the use of these technologies. For instance, the Department for Education in the UK released a Departmental Statement on “Generative artificial intelligence in education” in March 2023.

This development has brought forth a bundle of challenges not only for individuals but also for politics, education, the economy, the rule of law, and journalism. Journalism, in particular, finds itself confronted with a significant technological leap that directly impacts its structures, processes, and practices. It poses questions about the use of Artificial Intelligences like ChatGPT or Dall-E, the AI variant for image generation, in journalism and how to do so effectively. If we take the rapid changes driven by generative AI and new forms of technological embodiment seriously, it means questioning societal structures, communication, powers and, consequently, the future of democracy. As such, new machines can be regarded as a mayor challenge for society on both ends.

### **Autonomy and autonomous systems – Human Machine Relations**

The imaginaries of new technologies usually encompass a polarizing perspective that oscillates between the restrictive or dangerously uncontrollable effect of the technology, and the liberating, autonomy-enhancing function. Autonomy, originally a core concept of the Enlightenment and modernity, is one of the central and particularly high-profile concepts in the debate on digital change (In light of the expanding scope of autonomy attributions, multidisciplinary discussions articulate autonomy in the digital era in relation to technological trajectories of society. Highlighted by the comprehensive reviews by Chiodo (2023) and Ezenkwu & Starkey (2019), these contributions envision a future in which the traditional Kantian conception of autonomy appears to be diminishing in its applicability.. In a philosophical perspective, also discussed as the 'paradox of autonomy' (Fischer 2017), the figure of autonomy "simultaneously manifests a new conception of normativity and its own conception of freedom" (Khurana 2011, 7). A good example for the options and challenges apart from ChatGPT are voice assistants (VAs) - or smart speakers. These gadgets are technologies that process voice commands and execute them

according to their capabilities. Smart speakers, speech assistants, and chatbots have so far displayed a rather submissive behavior which does not reflect interpersonal exchange qualities. Many studies confirm that politeness rules in conversations with smart speakers are neglected by humans, as they don't perceive the encounter as in relation to an emotional vis-à-vis. Due to the fact that these VAs are located in people's homes, voice assistants have also proven to pose a severe risks for privacy breaches, data collection, and surveillance, which undermine people's trust in home-based AI. In media research, the approach of the "domestication theory" has proven to well explain many of the findings related to home technology. Some even regarded Alexa as a companion, started playing cards with her/him and felt lonely, when the VA was offline due to an internet breakdown. Hence, we can see that human-AI interaction goes both ways: fear of loss of privacy (distrust) and positive emotions on successful and desirable individual interactions, if a trust based relationship can be established.

#### **Trust in AI – The Model**

Trust and friendly AI thus go hand in hand. But still today we can see a rather skeptical attitude toward some technologies: more than 70% of German consumers don't trust AI (KAS, 2020), confirmed by a recent PEW study on attitudes toward AI in the US (PEW 2022). A general concern is the willingness to make data available if one's own interests are affected or covered by it. A distinction is made between structure trust in artificial intelligence as a whole, but this also means that the social debate about security, surveillance, and the role of the large digital corporations must be included. Data from a scenario-based survey experiments show that people are by and large concerned about risks and have mixed opinions about fairness and usefulness of automated decision-making at a societal level, with general attitudes influenced by individual characteristics. These studies point to an important strategy on contextualized AI, which should be tested for trustworthiness. Based on this model, the following hypotheses was tested in three empirical studies:

Human users need to trust AI systems, and they do if machines are beneficial to the extent that their actions can be controlled in order to achieve their objectives. These objectives have to be in accordance with society values, ethics, and norms.

This understanding calls for a situational and contextual approach on automation and autonomous systems. An important aspect for securing trust, is user-centeredness, visibility and user experience over time. The question of how personalized, for example, a chat word responds to a customer becomes can mark trustworthy interactions.

#### **The Studies**

In order to follow up the overall model and the get more insights into the role of trust in humans' relations to automation and autonomous systems, three studies were carried out:

- (1) Online questionnaire (n=239)
- (2) Focus group (n= 12)
- (3) Vignettes textual/visual impression test (n=32)

Interestingly, most of the respondents claim to be familiar with artificial intelligence and, according to their responses, can give an explanation on important properties and applications. Men tend to be more self-assured than women in this respect, this pointing to relevant gender differences. Overall the majority (53.3%) believes that artificial intelligence will be superior to human intelligence human intelligence, a surprising result, as most other studies claim the opposite.

Results on contextual influences demonstrate highly differentiated situational attitudes and practices in applications and contexts. Whereas smartphone based activities like navigation systems, auto-correction systems, and unlock functions of facial recognition are regarded as highly trustworthy, humanoid robots (like Sophia) or chatbots are seen as problematic.



		<p>Most accepted contexts were medical applications and agriculture, highly distrusted contexts referred to predictive policing and face recognition in public places.</p> <p>Attitudes toward smart home devices seem ambivalent on the one hand, a tendency toward positive evaluation and trust (property protection function) on the other hand. Participants were divided in their opinion as to whether one would like to have a Smart Home or not. Reasons for dislike were concerns about misuse of personal data, dependence on technology and hacker attacks, personal choice of devices. But positive experience of use and facilitation of everyday life seem to be even more decisive for use of smart home devices.</p> <p>Combining results of the studies, there seems to be a set of categories which define the degree of trust in automation and, furthermore, autonomous systems. Most importantly, these were transparency, data protection and data security, trust in the institution behind the AI, positive previous experiences, successful routines and personalization.</p> <p>But along with those increasingly pervasive technologies, the phenomenon of AI anxiety has emerged and needs to be discussed in more depth. Such fears about negative effects concern a variety of contexts and support a problematic overall technological distance (Schepman, et al. 2023), which then might lead to a lack of competences as a consequence. Another concern is the fact that such technologies might deepen the 'digital divide' and increase social inequality (Himmelreich &amp; Lim, 2022).</p> <p>The paper will discuss the implications of the studies in more detail, will tie them back to the theoretical model and will give an outlook on possible societal impacts.</p>
	<p>Dariusz Tworzydło (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Artificial intelligence in public relations</i></b></p> <p>Predicting the exact changes that may await the public relations industry in the next 20 years is difficult. However, it is possible to envision several directions in the evolution of the industry that will result from changes in the field of information and information technology development, with a particular focus on artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence can already make public relations more efficient in such areas as media monitoring, information creation, sentiment analysis and visualization creation.</p> <p>The article covers the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• artificial intelligence instead of copywriters</li> <li>• intelligent public relations consulting</li> <li>• AI tools used in public relations</li> </ul> <p>The article is prepared based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis of literature sources,</li> <li>• analysis of available AI tools that can be used in public relations,</li> <li>• analysis of the results of quantitative surveys conducted using the CAWI technique and the audit technique</li> </ul> <p>The research was conducted on a sample of more than 200 public relations practitioners in Poland. They provide answers to questions about the use of technology including AI in their professional work. They indicate the changes that are taking place in the PR profession. The article presents the impact of ChatGPT and other models based on artificial intelligence on the public relations profession.</p> <p>Among other things, the quantitative research evaluated claims about the impact that the development of artificial intelligence (AI) could have in the public relations industry. Evaluated were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the impact of AI on the level of disinformation in the PR industry,</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the impact on the pacy effects of PR practitioners,</li> <li>• the impact of AI on the potential reduction of labor demand in the public relations industry</li> <li>• potential areas in which it will be possible to replace the work of PR practitioners with AI</li> </ul>
11.30-13.00	<b>2.3 ECREA: Different Media, Different AI Usage and Challenges</b> <b>Chairs: Wayne Wanta, Marlena Szyber</b>  Room 1.128	<b>Abstract</b>
	Marcos Mayo-Cubero (Complutense University of Madrid)	<p><b><i>Application and Ethical Principles of Artificial Intelligence in Audiovisual Media: The Case of Sky News</i></b></p> <p>This extended abstract seeks to elucidate the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in television newsrooms, navigating the opportunities and risks inherent in the convergence of AI and audiovisual journalism. The first part engages in a case study, scrutinizing the integration of AI within the esteemed British news outlet Sky News. Renowned for its global information dissemination, Sky News conducted an experiment involving the creation of an AI-generated reporter using ChatGPT. The objective was to assess the AI's capability to produce journalistic content adhering to professional standards. While endowed with the appearance and voice of a real producer, the AI reporter demonstrated proficiency in generating written and visual content with reasonable precision. However, ethical challenges surfaced, notably "hallucinations" in certain informative pieces.</p> <p>The second part of the article delves into the ethical challenges accompanying the integration of AI in newsrooms. By analyzing ethical codes, the research examines principles adopted by various audiovisual media in three dimensions: human supervision, transparency, and responsibility. These codes universally underscore the significance of reverting to journalistic fundamentals in utilizing AI tools. Furthermore, the article advocates for understanding the functioning, regulation, and potential negative consequences, such as the amplification of biases. The research concludes with a discussion and recommendations for journalists and media navigating the ethical landscape in the era of AI.</p> <p>The case study provides insightful observations on the possibilities and limitations of generative AI in audiovisual journalism. AI projects are intricate, often demanding specialized skills not universally present in audiovisual newsrooms. The Sky News experiment is a collaborative project showcasing how a partnership between programming experts, AI generative specialists, and media entities can yield promising results. While the basic journalistic skills of the AI reporter were commendable, generating two rigorous and stylistically appropriate news pieces within a 20-minute software execution window, the experiment illuminated significant ethical challenges stemming from hallucinations. The AI reporter fabricated false information, notably on milk spillage and its impact on road safety.</p> <p>At this point, reflecting on the origins of these hallucinations is pertinent. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that language models like ChatGPT are not designed to respond with a simple "I don't know." According to experts, this compels the machine to generate spurious correlations and fabricate evidence for plausible answers. The Sky News experiment underscores the absence of intrinsic honesty and ethical considerations in generative AI. It highlights that language models lack imagination and are confined to offering responses based on pre-existing data and training. While the AI reporter's intelligence is limited,</p>

		<p>there is recognition of AI's potential to transform and enhance journalistic practice by efficiently automating repetitive tasks. The Sky News experiment reveals that AI grapples more with curiosity than creativity.</p> <p>Connecting the case study with the analysis of Ethical Codes in audiovisual media reveals a direct correlation between observed challenges and outlined principles. Firstly, the paramount importance of human supervision in AI generative processes in journalism is underscored. Despite the AI reporter's capacity to propose reasonable topics and approaches, hallucinations necessitated human intervention to ensure ethical rigor in editorial processes. This principle aligns with the Ethical Codes of entities such as the BBC, Reuters, DPA, and CBC, emphasizing the necessity of human supervision in editorial decision-making. While AI demonstrated capabilities in performing some basic journalistic tasks, it also highlighted the need for human oversight to uphold professional journalistic standards.</p> <p>Secondly, transparency emerges as another critical element. Clear labeling of AI-generated content and transparent disclosure of its origin, as advocated by Reuters, BBC, and CBC codes, is imperative. Failure to address these issues seriously may result in AI amplifying existing societal biases. To ensure ethical AI coverage, journalists should consistently question: How do these tools function? Are they regulated? Who profits from them? Who benefits, and which societal groups these tools might adversely affect? The lack of transparency causes many generative AI models to function as black boxes, making it exceedingly challenging to comprehend their decision-making processes. Greater transparency from companies developing generative AI contributes to a better understanding of the tools and generates more socially responsible and higher-quality informational content. The Sky News case study is an outstanding example of transparency and sets a precedent for others.</p> <p>Thirdly, social responsibility emerges as the foundational principle of ethical analysis. The commitment to act in the best public interest should be framed within the broadest interpretation of media and journalists' social responsibility (Author, 2017). Both entities play pivotal roles in addressing the ethical risks associated with AI usage. The Sky News experiment underscores the necessity of thorough evaluation to mitigate potential negative consequences. At the same time, an AI error in an article recommendation may have limited repercussions; publishing false information fabricated by the AI reporter could have had devastating consequences for the Sky News brand's reputation.</p> <p>In conclusion, there is a compelling need to continuously enhance technology and processes to ensure that AI is impeccably rigorous, ethical, and socially responsible. As observed in the experiment, collaboration between journalists and experts should be paramount to balance the efficient use of AI and the ethical integrity of journalism.</p>
	<p>Laura Amigo (Università della Svizzera Italiana), Colin Porlezza (Università della Svizzera Italiana)</p>	<p><b><i>AI and journalism in Switzerland: Navigating challenges and redefining relevance</i></b></p> <p>AI, algorithms, and automation increasingly influence editorial decisions, from information gathering to news production and distribution (Cools, 2022; de-Lima-Santos &amp; Ceron, 2021; Zamith, 2019). This process is part of the broader digitization of the public sphere, catalyzing a transformation of journalism (Deuze &amp; Witschge, 2018; Bell et al., 2017; Anderson et al., 2012). While journalism has always been defined according to the ways it engages with technology, politics, and economics (Conboy, 2004), in today's digital-centered news media ecosystem, specific concerns have been raised regarding the impact of AI on journalism's relevance. When it comes to journalism's relevance, we need to differentiate between two levels: First, at a general level, relevance is understood as the impact journalism exerts on society and individuals, both in the political domain as well as in everyday life. This refers primarily to the fulfillment of a democratic role of disseminating information and controlling those in power, but also to a social role of daily orientation, integration, and the creation of shared identities and references – which is why we can also speak of the social relevance of journalism. This more general notion of relevance</p>

related to a more specific understanding that entails five subdimensions, which are more closely linked to news work: credibility, media responsibility, quality, institutional authority, and audience expectations (Amigo et al., 2023).

The relevance of journalism has become a central issue, even in Switzerland: not only is journalism competing for audiences' attention with social media platforms and alternative (media) actors that overtake the news discourse (Neveu, 2019), but there is also a growing disaffection, news deprivation (Eisenegger & Vogler, 2022) and even mistrust from audiences toward journalists and news organizations (Zuckerman, 2017; Newman, 2022). Additionally, the acceptance of AI in journalism is low in Switzerland, as respondents prefer content produced by human journalists and see the increased use of AI as detrimental to the quality of news (Vogler et al., 2023). Moreover, the institutionalization of AI in news work raises new ethical challenges (Porlezza & Ferri, 2022) that the Swiss news industry only slowly addresses, mainly through self-regulatory means such as guidelines or codes of ethics (Becker et al., 2023; Porlezza et al., 2023).

Journalism studies have often sought to analyze how new technologies are introduced and used in newsrooms (e.g., Boczkowski, 2010; Paterson & Domingo, 2008), trying then to "redefine", "reimagine" or even "rethink" the journalistic profession (e.g., Peters & Broersma, 2013). In line with these perspectives, this paper seeks to explore the integration and perception of AI systems in the journalistic field in Switzerland, posing the following research questions:

- What are the uses of AI in Swiss newsrooms?
- How do journalists perceive AI integration in newsrooms?
- To what extent is this integration perceived as reshaping the journalism profession?

This study is based on interviews conducted with journalists and managing staff from news organizations in the three main Swiss language regions (French, Italian, and German). A preliminary focus group was conducted in October 2023 in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland with four participants, comprising journalists or senior management from news media organizations. To answer the research questions, the authors first carried out the focus group with the overarching question of journalism's relevance in the light of an increasing algorithmization and automation of news work. In a second step, the focus group discussions were transcribed and then analyzed using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) by generating codes for relevant features such as the rationales for using AI, concerns over its use, or governance-strategies news organizations adopted regarding the responsible implementation of AI systems. These codes allowed to identify meanings that lie more or less "beneath the semantic surface of the data" (Brown & Clarke, 2012). In terms of progression, by the time of the conference, the language-specific data collection and thematic analysis will be completed.

Preliminary findings indicate that the deployment of AI systems in newsrooms is viewed as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, respondents perceive AI as a technology that needs to be "kept under control" to avoid that audiences lose any further trust in the news media and maintain journalism's credibility and institutional authority. This goal should mainly be achieved through a critical-conscious approach towards the technology as well as the establishment of common standards through (ethical) guidelines for the responsible use of AI in journalism. Simultaneously, respondents see AI-driven journalism as an opportunity to (re)legitimize their professional identity and work. Results show a significant antagonism between the capacity of human actors and non-human actants in "contextualizing" editorial content: both fact-checking and the ability to produce emotional storytelling are regarded by the interviewees as key journalistic roles, even as an "insurance policy" for a uniquely human contribution to safeguard journalism's relevance in society.

Journalism's relevance therefore seems to be (re)constructed on the founding practices of the profession aimed at giving credibility to information through journalists' ability to verify, fact-check, and prioritize. At the same time, the relevance of

		<p>journalism seems to surprisingly build on journalists' emotional capacity. While emotions have been an integral part of journalists' professional practices (Le Cam &amp; Ruellan, 2017), they have rarely been claimed as a crucial characteristic vis-à-vis objectivity, impartiality, or detachment - which have been described as major concepts in Western journalism (Wahl-Jorgensen &amp; Pannti, 2021). The analysis contributes to deepening our understanding of how journalists adopt new technologies, either by undergoing transformations and shifts regarding e.g. their professional identity (Schapals &amp; Porlezza, 2020) or by trying to resist or master it (Wu et al., 2019). It offers insights into the relevance of journalism, and more specifically into the way journalists seek to (re)value their profession and work in an increasingly algorithmed news media ecosystem.</p>
	<p>Leopoldina Fortunati (University of Udine); Autumn Edwards (Western Michigan University); Chad Edwards (Western Michigan University)</p>	<p><b><i>Mediatized Immediacy in Alexa News and Information Delivery: A Cross-National Study</i></b></p> <p>This extended abstract explores the involvement of voice-based assistants (VBAs), focusing on Alexa, in contemporary mediatization. "Mediatization" is a widely used term to depict the extensive impact of communication technologies on everyday life, leading to substantial transformations in numerous societal spheres (Livingstone, 2012). This concept underscores the interplay between the evolution of media and communication and its repercussions on culture and society (Kopecka-Piech &amp; Bolin, 2023).</p> <p>As Couldry and Hepp (2013, p.197) argue:  "[M]ediatization is a concept used to analyze critically the interrelation between changes in media and communications on the one hand, and changes in culture and society on the other... With regard to qualitative aspects, mediatization refers to the specificity of certain media within sociocultural change: It matters what kind of media is used for what kind of communication."</p> <p>The present investigation aims to explore the further complexity VBAs introduce in the mediatization context and, more specifically, in the news and information world. We will focus on audience gatekeeping related to the mediatized immediacy in Alexa news and information delivery.</p> <p><b>Present Study</b></p> <p>The emergence of the Internet and social media has significantly transformed the environment where conventional mass media once held exclusive authority in depicting and recounting society and reality (Hall, 1980). Mass media's gatekeeping established them as credible authorities in journalistic procedures and the sole entities accountable for the mediatization procedure through their use of textual and visual content of events happening in life (Bennett et al., 1982). As the number of guardians overseeing the news and information threshold increased with the Internet and their significance varied depending on the circumstances, the Internet initiated robust disintermediation processes followed by subsequent reintermediation of reality and society (Wigand, 2020). In this evolving landscape, the mediatization processes grew more intricate with the emergence of online news platforms, digital newspapers (including the online editions of traditional papers), blogs, specialized virtual communities for information dissemination, and social media.</p> <p>We hypothesize that new technologies such as VBAs are accelerating the process of online news meta-reintermediation. This study analyzed open-ended responses from 655 university students in the United States and Italy. Only a small percentage of the 451 participants in the study searched for news and information from Alexa, and most were unaware of the meta-reintermediation process, according to the analysis of the open-ended responses. Nonetheless, using Alexa adds to the</p>

potential blending of news, information, and knowledge, adding complexity to the mediatization process that can be challenging for users to unravel.

This study is part of a large-scale, quantitative, and cross-cultural survey-based research project that examined people's perceptions of Alexa's gender and status as a communicator (Authors et al., 2022a), people's perceptions, expectations, and desires of Alexa (Authors et al., 2022b), and Alexa's usage practices (Authors et al., forthcoming). This current exploratory study examines findings on Alexa's use for news and information based on the content analysis of four free-text responses from respondents in an extensive data collection on Amazon's Alexa within the theoretical framework of mediatization. The presentation will go into the specifics of the methodology of the study.

**Sample Findings: Desire for Mediatized Immediacy in Alexa News and Information Delivery**

The main finding of the current study is that a small number of respondents search for news and information from Alexa. However, respondents desire Alexa to function as a provider of news and information and a partner with whom to discuss the news and information deeply. When users use Alexa to search for news, it is worthwhile to investigate the specific kind of news they seek, given that Alexa's primary function is to deliver weather updates. Users anticipate that Alexa can supply news on predefined topics like finance, sports, and weather, which are typically automated in newsrooms. In their viewpoint, Alexa is perceived as a reliable choice for this particular news genre amidst the numerous options they have at their disposal. VBAs have the potential to break away from the one-way format of conventional mass media, where the news is disseminated by the source (TV, Radio, etc.), and the audience can only consume it. The expectation with Alexa is that users can directly discuss the news with the news delivery source. For example, one respondent said, "I feel like Alexa should almost give like a little news report of what happened today when someone asks her and then people can talk to her about the news." Another wrote, "I would like to have an actual conversation where we go back and forth on a topic. Discussing, sharing opinions, branching into stories related to the topic, and overall building a complicated conversation." Several respondents shared their wishes to "talk about more complex things," "inquire more about complex topics," and "ask more in-depth questions and have them answered."

VBAs represent an advancement beyond online forums or social media platforms, where users primarily engage in discussions with each other. In simpler terms, the aspiration is for a genuine, real-time interaction between VBAs and users. The goal is to have a virtual assistant that provides news precisely when users require it, rather than adhering to the scheduling of mass media and in a conversational or dialogic format, fostering a back-and-forth exchange, as opposed to the traditional one-way broadcast.

The findings suggest that some respondents wanted Alexa to provide personalized news and information on demand and the opportunity to further converse and interact with the VBA on topics of interest. People appreciated the immediacy (direct and instant involvement with a news provider) that Alexa could bring to news and information searches. This also represents a further mediatization of content, as Alexa significantly influences the selection, presentation, and elaboration of requested information. In other words, "mediatized immediacy" can be interpreted as the real or perceived closeness to the actual news/information as it passes through VBA Alexa, which acts as another layer of mediation. For some, there was a desire to receive a kind of personalized news from this virtual assistant in a domestic environment. These participants know that using artificial intelligence could help tailor news according to the interests of individual users at some point in the future. Thus, there is mediatized immediacy afforded by Alexa, in which users are brought closer to news and information through conversation with its apparent source/messenger. The desire to learn and understand information through asking, answering,

		<p>and discussing aligns with a broader social shift toward viewing the world as a series of dialogues and interactions (consider the move from searching to asking that distinguishes Googling from using ChatGPT).</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>In conclusion, our findings reveal several critical points about how Alexa is used for news and information delivery and its role in the mediatization of society. Participants conveyed an anticipation that Alexa should serve as a dependable source of news and information with an immediate, tailored, and potentially interactive approach or what we label "mediatized immediacy. The desire to emphasize real-time engagement with a VBA news provider may obscure the fundamental truth that Alexa, rather than a way to circumvent it, is simply another point on the broad continuum of mediation.</p>
	<p>Sarah Weißmann (University of Potsdam); Aaron Philipp (University of Potsdam); Chiara Krauter (University of Potsdam); Claudia Buder (University of Potsdam); Roland Verwiebe (University of Potsdam)</p>	<p><b><i>Unveiling online sentiment and hate speech. An analysis of the effects of platform features and content creators' social characteristics using a representative sample of German-speaking YouTube channels</i></b></p> <p>In the digital world, AI-based technology intervenes directly in all social affairs by sorting, recommending, ranking, and evaluating content. It changed our online behaviour and digital communication. AI helps us to connect with people, improves our efficiency, and even performs tasks by itself. But there are substantial risks in the use of this technology that can lead to biased outcomes (Chander, 2017), inequality (Espin-Noboa et al., 2012), and individual discrimination (Buolamwini &amp; Gebru, 2018). This feeds an ongoing transformation of the quality and the structure of discourses and interpersonal dynamics, which is further enhanced through the anonymity and easy accessibility of the internet (Gomez-Baya et al., 2019; Liebermann &amp; Schroeder, 2020).</p> <p>All social media platforms apply their own functions that people can use to communicate and share their opinions. On YouTube, users can express their thoughts to others and content creators constantly receive feedback in the form of comments. How they end up below a video is determined by factors like the channel's audience, platform and user moderation and the algorithmic sorting responsible for increasing the reach of certain videos. It is a relevant feature of YouTube and other platforms that online communication is constantly changing due to, for example, self-censorship from commentators to avoid platform bans (Steen et al., 2023) and the advancements in (dangerous) technologies like bots (Himelein-Wachowiak et al., 2021). Following debates on bullying and the spread of misinformation, social media platforms are increasingly fighting against harmful comments with extensive user agreements and complex machine learning-based content moderation systems (YouTube, 2017; YouTube, 2019; YouTube, 2023). Still, negative responses, or even "hate" comments, and different forms of discrimination are daily occurrences for some users, but especially for YouTubers who work on the platform (Park et al. 2021). This is analysed by an increasing number of international studies which show that content creators experience various forms of online hate or discrimination with the highest prevalence occurring in relation to race, physical aspects, gender, and age (Silva et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2022).</p> <p>Previous YouTube studies have often focussed on singular topics like gaming and science (Amarasekara &amp; Grant, 2019; Döring &amp; Mohseni, 2019; Gajanayake &amp; Sandanayake, 2020). There are also publications on hate speech towards specific social groups or even individuals (Breazu &amp; Machin, 2023; Carvalho et al., 2023; Latorre &amp; Amores, 2021; Park et al., 2021; Wotanis &amp; McMillan, 2014). Most of the literature, especially in the early years of YouTube research, use qualitative data (Ernst et al., 2017). A comprehensive comparison between different topics based on quantitative data is not yet available but has become possible through the rise of computational methods (Döring &amp; Mohseni, 2020; Metamoros-Fernandez &amp; Farkas, 2021). This research gap marks the starting point for our paper: We look at communication forms that are established in AI-based platforms and investigate how patterns of sentiment and hate speech are structured and distributed, with a focus on YouTube</p>

channels based in German-speaking countries. We analyse differences in sentiment and hate speech along important socio-structural variables as well as platform variables regarding the following research questions: How do platform features (e.g., topic, number of subscribers, number of videos) and content creators' social characteristics (e.g., gender, race, age) determine sentiment and hate speech on YouTube?

In our paper, we analyse a random sample of N=5,000 YouTubers from a total survey of YouTube channels registered in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (N=115,975). To fill the lack of missing sociodemographic variables in social media data we annotated variables such as age, race, gender, and educational background using a standardized classification survey for the 5,000 YouTube channels (Seewann et al., 2022). We then test various sentiment and hate speech analysis methods on YouTube comments of our sample. While these natural language processing techniques are mainly applied to English texts, we try to fill another research gap by comparing their application on German texts. Starting with easy applicable classification methods such as lexicon approaches, we use different machine-learning classifiers (Logistic Regression, Support Vector Machine, k-Nearest Neighbour) and implement complex deep-learning algorithms such as BERT. We calculate the sentiment, hate speech and polarisation on video and channel level by using measures to describe aggregated data such as means, medians or standard deviations. We use them to identify different patterns in the communication structure of channels in dependence of socio-structural and platform characteristics by applying cluster analysis. Regression analysis is used to determine differences in sentiment and hate speech in dependence of sociodemographic variables.

First results show effects of gender and race on sentiment and hate speech. It should be noted that – contrary to public perception – positive and negative sentiment are relatively balanced and hate speech can only be observed in extremely rare cases. Surprisingly, the cluster analysis shows that younger channels, mostly in the topic gaming, receive more polarising sentiment compared to established channels who are producing cultural and political content. Channels hosted by males receive negative sentiment more often than females. The most interesting result states that BIPoC content creators receive less negative sentiment than white channel hosts when they are not visible in their videos but are confronted with a higher amount of negative sentiment, if they decide to appear in front of the camera. Preliminary results indicate a higher prevalence of hate speech in the comments section of men. Furthermore, we found evidence for a lower occurrence of hate speech in the comments section of BIPoC channel hosts. The channel topic of sport shows also a lower frequency of hate speech comments while topics such as entertainment or gaming exhibit more hate speech.

With our research, we contribute to the field of social media studies from a sociological perspective. Social media platforms such as YouTube are subject to complex AI-based systems and influence our interpersonal relationships and the way we communicate. Analysing sentiment and hate speech contributes to our understanding of how communication patterns are formed and under what circumstances content creators are affected within digital environments. With our classification survey, we are able to combine digital trace data with socio-structural variables which enables us to use completely new methods of analysis for YouTube. Lastly, we advance the application of sentiment and hate speech detection on this social media platform by systematically comparing state-of-the-art methods for German language.



<p>11.30-13.00</p>	<p><b>2.4 Between Propaganda and Strategic Communication</b>  <b>Chairs: Paweł Matuszewski, Jakub Jakubowski</b></p> <p>Room 1.132</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Success Osayi (University of Colorado Boulder)</p>	<p><i>Mediated public diplomacy in sub-Saharan Africa: A strategic contest for hearts and minds during the Israel-Hamas war</i></p> <p><b>Study purpose</b></p> <p>The relationship between Israel and Africa has always been a complicated one (Bakan &amp; Abu-Laban, 2010). Bigon and Katz (2016) explains how the manner in which the Jewish state was created in 1948 stirred up negative sentiments from most African countries whom for much their history had had to live under the devastating effects of colonisation, racism, and in the case of southern Africa, apartheid. Naturally, the continent’s sympathies were directed towards the Palestinian people. Over time, those sympathies only grew, with most African countries refusing to entertain the legitimacy of Israeli statehood (Srikanth, 2015). Fast forward to 2023, and in the midst of the escalating Israeli-Hamas war, African countries find themselves immersed in fervent debates surrounding the conflict, revealing a continent divided as nations adopt divergent stances on the matter.</p> <p>The quandary emerges: why does a continent that endured the severe ramifications of centuries-long colonialism and racism, and that have historically aligned with Palestine, now exhibit a palpable division? The short answer according to Lawal (2023) is that the divisions underscore each government's endeavour to compartmentalise its interests. On one facet, profound historical connections persist with the Palestinian cause; concurrently, there exists a pragmatic need to embrace Israeli technology, military support, and aid.</p> <p>Scholarship on the issue, however, suggests this change in sentiments might be more complex than just national interests and historic sentiments. Sheafer and Gabay's (2009) study found that the Israeli government and Palestinian National Authority do engage in intensive mediated public diplomacy, designed to sway public opinions in the United States and the United Kingdom toward their favour. In the wake of the current war and the dramatic shift in the positions of African governments over the years on the Middle Eastern conflict, this study would investigate the potential presence of similar mediated public diplomacy on the African continent by both the Israeli government and Palestinian National Authority, as a possible explainer for the shifting sentiments among Africans regarding the Middle East conflict.</p> <p>This research builds upon earlier studies within the intersection of media agenda-building and international relations, particularly in the realm of mediated public diplomacy. The primary purpose here is to scrutinize foreign media agenda-building in Africa, as a manifestation of soft power, undertaken by the Israeli government and the Palestinian National Authority in a time of elevated conflict. The specific objective is to discern, through empirical data, which of the foreign entities might be more successful in influencing sentiments on the continent toward either party during the war.</p> <p><b>Theoretical framework</b></p> <p>The concept of "agenda-building" was first introduced by Cobb and Elder (1971). It is concerned with the mechanisms through which certain issues attain prominence in the attention of decision makers, as opposed to others. This phenomenon, when juxtaposed with the notion of media agenda, aligns closely with the principles of media agenda-setting, as defined by Dearing</p>

and Rogers (1996). McCombs (2005) further explicates the processes by which news sources with competing agendas endeavour to shape the focus of the news media, essentially elucidating the intricate dynamics of the media agenda-building process.

In Sheafer and Gabay's (2009) exploration of the cross-border media agenda-building efforts of the Israeli government and the Palestinian National Authority in shaping the international narrative of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, they underscore the limited scholarly attention given to international endeavours aimed at influencing the media agenda of foreign countries. This study seeks to address this gap by scrutinising the media agenda-building activities of the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority in sub-Saharan Africa during Israel's war with Hamas. Agenda building will be investigated across different levels of analysis – object and issue salience (first level) and attribute salience (second level).

Despite framing theory, specifically frame building, being a plausible alternative for this research, preference is given to media agenda-building to circumvent potential criticisms outlined by Entman (1993). These criticisms pertain to the methodological challenges associated with determining the salience of frames from simple count of frame indicators. The diverse and fragmented cultural and tribal landscapes prevalent in most African countries (Mashau, Kone & Mutshaeni, 2015) means that a holistic analysis of content in order to determine salience from the overall context might be very challenging.

#### **Research questions**

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1** How often do Israeli government statements on the war with Hamas get picked up overall by sub-Saharan African news media and how does that compare to the Palestinian National Authority?

**RQ2** What is the relationship between the object and issue salience of both the Israeli government statements on the war with Hamas and related news content in sub-Saharan African news media, and how does it compare with that of the Palestinian National Authority?

**RQ3** Are there second-level agenda-building capabilities of the statements on the war with Hamas of both the Israeli government and the Palestinian National Authority on sub-Saharan African news media content? If yes, which of the two has the greater second-level agenda-building effect?

#### **Method**

To answer the research questions, this study uses quantitative content analysis. Statements from the Israeli government and the Palestinian National Authority that mention the war with Hamas are currently being analysed for object, issue, and attribute salience.

To make the study manageable, three sub-Saharan African countries were purposively sampled, based on their economic importance. Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya were sampled for being the English-speaking countries with the largest economies in sub-Saharan Africa (International Monetary Fund, 2023). English speaking countries were selected for convenience, as the researcher speaks English as a first language. In addition, Nexis Uni is currently being used to pull all news stories related to the Israel-Hamas war in the three African countries. A variety of search queries have been used including "Israel-Hamas war", "Israeli government", "Palestinian Authority", "Mahmood Abbas", "Benjamin Netanyahu", "Palestine", "Israel", "Hamas", etc.

Measures of analysis were informed by Kiousis et al (2009) for object, issue, and attribute salience. This included coding for news placement, length, relevance, tone, and prevailing issues in both the statements attributed to the Israeli government and Palestinian National Authority, and the related news stories put together using Nexis Uni.

		<p>Before beginning the analysis, I first tested for interrater reliability by having independent coders analyse 10 of each of the statements attributed to the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority and also 30 related news articles from the sample being built with Nexis Uni. The results were <math>k = .89</math> and <math>k = .92</math> respectively, indicating high consistency in the coding scheme.</p> <p>Descriptive statistics are being used for analysing data aimed at answering RQ1, while correlation analysis (Spearman's Rho) are being used for analysing data aimed at answering RQ2 and RQ3.</p> <p><b>Preliminary findings</b></p> <p>Due to the timeliness of the issue, data collection will continue for as long as possible, until the time comes to turn in the complete paper for the conference. So far, about 30 combined statements from the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority have been analysed, and that's in addition to about 62 related news stories gathered with Nexis Uni.</p> <p>Preliminary findings indicate that the Israeli government has a clear advantage over the Palestinian National Authority across most levels of analysis. More news stories related to the Israeli government statements were found through Nexis Uni than those related to the Palestinian National Authority. In addition, the tone of the reports in these related news stories were found to align more with those from the Israeli government than those from the Palestinian National Authority. These notwithstanding, I haven't been able to find any evidence of object salience transfer from either party to the related news content. There however appears to be transfer of issue salience from the Israeli government to the media in the sampled sub-Saharan African countries.</p> <p>An interesting pattern that has been observed is a gradual but consistent decline in the advantage the Israeli government has maintained over the Palestinian National Authority in terms of ability to influence African news media content. The early days of the war, following the attack on Israel by Hamas, saw nearly 70% of all Israeli government statements picked up by the local news media in the three African countries, compared to just 12% for the Palestinian National Authority. That number currently stands at 14% (for the Israeli government) for the period between November 5th – 11th. Data collection will be concluded before the deadline for the submission of the full paper.</p>
	<p>Brock Mays (University of Colorado Boulder)</p>	<p><b><i>NAFO Expansion is Nonnegotiable: Bridging the (Rowdy) Gap Between Online and Offline Activism in Support of Ukraine</i></b></p> <p>The North Atlantic Fella Organization (distinct from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is a decentralized group of online activists who oppose Russian aggression and combat its disinformation campaigns online. NAFO's volunteer members, known as Fellas, fundraise for Ukraine's defenders and combat disinformation on the battlefield of social media. According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, "Of all the vagaries we label as 'non-traditional security', none is more amusing or indicative of the role of digital networks than... NAFO... [which has] become a hallmark of the highly mediatized Russian invasion of Ukraine. These informational insurgencies aim to counter propaganda initiatives with sarcasm and wit. Any post on Twitter or elsewhere advocating support for the Russian invasion, or the legitimacy of sham referenda to annex parts of Ukraine to Russia is met with relentless mockery, sarcasm, and memes from NAFO members." On the information battlefield, Fellas' weapon is rowdy humor in the form of memes as they join the information war with pro-Russian actors. This study aims to explore the connection between NAFO's online activism and its real-world impact. This novel study hypothesizes that</p>

		<p>online participation correlates positively with offline actions in support of Ukraine. It is important because it explains how individual and group motivations lead to real world impacts.</p> <p>This study examines the perceived and tangible, real-world effects of NAFO members both on and offline. It contributes to the literature of activism by helping explain activists' motivations and experiences. It explores how participants' self-perceived impact of their actions align with their actual observations and experiences offline. Data driven results provide information for strategic planning to prioritize activities and initiatives that resonate with NAFO Fellas and their sense of wanting to make a difference. Motivation toward specific online activities, such as mocking pro-Russian accounts, fundraising, reporting offensive content, and debunking disinformation, are expected to correlate with increased offline activism. This contributes to a broader understanding of online activist groups and their impact on real-world outcomes. It will provide the opportunity to explore how participants' perceptions of impact align with their actual observations and experiences and their motivations for offline activism as well providing valuable insights for strategic planning and prioritizing activities that resonate with NAFO Fellas.</p> <p>This study uses a theoretical framework combining Social Movement Theory, Resource Mobilization Theory, and Active Audience Theory. Social Movement Theory explains the role of collective identities and in-group dynamics of social movements such as NAFO. It explains the decentralized organizational structure of activist groups, like NAFO, and how these groups' goal is not to capture the state, but to gain influence over various political arenas—in this case, NAFO's online battlefield of Twitter/X. Resource Mobilization Theory is used to examine how NAFO utilizes its human volunteers, social networks, and organizational strategies to achieve its goals. Active Audience Theory explains how active, rather than passive, audiences are able to interact with other people using the unique environment of the internet as a tool for activism.</p> <p>500 NAFO Fellas participated in an anonymous online Qualtrics questionnaire consisting of approximately 80 structured questions. The survey assesses participants' motivations, perceptions of impact, and levels of engagement. Various forms of activism, both online and offline, are analyzed. Participants were found on Twitter through a post using popular NAFO hashtags such as #Fella, #NAFO, and #NafoExpansionIsNonNegotiable. The original post was viewed over 22,000 times and shared 300 times, resulting in a successful snowball sample. The study is in progress, but all data has been gathered and will be analyzed in the coming weeks, culminating in a paper in mid-December.</p> <p>As reported on Sky News, "It may be NATO sending missiles and tanks to Ukraine, but on social media, an information war is being fought by a rowdy band of online comrades called NAFO. Meet the fellas. NAFO... [is] on the front lines of a fight against Russian propaganda and have raised a million dollars for Ukraine's armies on the real-world battlefield." In this way, despite its humorous methods, NAFO is a very real actor opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a novel, unique part of the information war.</p>
	<p>Konrad Kiljan (University of Warsaw); Barbara Konat (Adam Mickiewicz University)</p>	<p><b><i>How to appeal to fear in a fearful context? War proximity and the perception of populists in pre-election debates</i></b></p> <p>Recent years have witnessed a growing academic fascination with the phenomenon of populism, capturing the attention of scholars in the fields of media studies (Baldwin-Philippi 2018, Vresse 2018, Kalsens 2019, Bracciale 2021, Finlayson 2022) and political science (Berman 2021, Hunger &amp; Paxton 2022, Klinge et al 2023). While some studies suggested that populists use significantly more negative and and less positive emotional appeals than mainstream politicians (Widman 2021) to fuel the narrative of ordinary people rising versus corrupt elites (Skonieczny 2018), others suggested that the scale of affective responses to that rhetoric varied only among specific audiences (Schumacher, Rooduijn, Bakker 2022) and that many mainstream politicians adapt simplistic language as often as the populists (Wang, Y., &amp; Liu, H. 2018). The purpose of our</p>

research is to empirically validate the emotional dynamics that have been posited as underpinning the success of populism in contemporary politics. As the populists build their success on a sense of fear, it is interesting to observe how their effectiveness changes when an external source of fear influences the entire political scene. By aggregating data from six different countries in which elections took place in 2023, we aim to investigate whether geographical proximity to war influenced the frequency of fear appeals across the political spectrum and their impact on politicians' reception. Through an examination of the prevalence of emotional language and the emotions elicited among online audiences, we analyze the continued relevance of populism theories and their application to the 2023 elections.

In the context of populist rhetoric, emotions are perceived to play a central role. Notably, scholars have observed that populism often adopts an emotional tone, frequently characterized by fear-mongering (Bonikowski 2017, Rico, Guinjoan, Anduiza 2017, Skonieczny 2018, Gerstlé, Nai 2019). These analyses have cast emotions in a negative light, accusing their exploitation for the contemporary decline in the level of public discourse. Prior to the recent rise of populist movements, emotions were conventionally considered an essential catalyst for establishing connections and trust between leaders and the public (Marcus 2000) as well as a tool for mobilizing emancipatory movements (Bargetz 2015). In the last decade, there was no consensus about the rhetoric that democratic politicians should adopt as an alternative to fear-mongering language (Moffitt 2016). As a result, mainstream politicians circulated between offering a sense of hope and positive agenda and portraying the populists as a dangerous threat to international stability and quality of life. When factors like pandemics, climate change, and war heightened citizens' sense of insecurity, constructing optimistic democratic narratives became an even more challenging task (O'Regan 2023). Some studies suggested that mainstream politicians have already simplified their language, speaking in a manner no more complex than populists (McDonnell, Ondelli 2020). Nevertheless, it remained uncertain whether an escalation in the use of emotional appeals positively affects their election performance.

Populists politicians try to hold a monopoly on fear, portraying mainstream political elites as a threat to citizens' freedom and well-being. Russian aggression on Ukraine resulted in a re-emergence of another source of fear, but that effect was unevenly among European countries (Anghel & Jones 2023). As geographical location alters threat perception, we wonder if populists and mainstream politicians adapt different emotional strategies when war occurs just across the border. Our study compares the emotional dynamics in pre-election debates in three countries bordering Russia (Estonia, Finland, Poland) and three countries distant from the conflict (Netherlands, Greece, Spain). We analyze both election debate transcripts and Twitter reactions to observe differences both in the rhetoric and in its effectiveness.

As our methodology we use the conceptualization of pathos as an appeal to emotions, present in modern rhetoric (Walton, 1992, Konat, Gajewska, Rossa, 20xx). Here, pathos is conceived as an interactional event, in which the speaker is attempting to elicit emotions in the audience for rhetorical gain, using linguistic means. The presence of emotional appeal in text can be manually annotated (Gajewska et al., 20xx). Developing this approach and using a manual annotation scheme, we performed automatic annotation with OpenAI's GPT model via API. We provided the automated language model (GPT) with a set of instructions (annotation scheme) previously used for human annotation. Initial investigations in computational linguistics annotation have shown that GPT models, when provided with clear annotation schemes, can perform at a similar level to untrained human annotators (Gilardi, Alizadeh, Kubli, 2023). With this method we can determine if the emotional appeals and elicited emotions vary between populists and across different countries. Our methodology includes analyzing intensity and distribution of 5 basic emotions: joy, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. This typology is based on Paul Ekman's concept of basic emotions, which are claimed to be culturally universal and biologically based, reflecting common human

		<p>experiences. This allows us to quantify and visualize the prevalence and intensity of specific emotional appeals in political speeches, offering a nuanced understanding of how different emotions are leveraged by politicians to influence public opinion.</p> <p>Our initial results from the pre-election debate from Poland (Oct, 2023) indicate overall high levels of anger and fear. At the same time, the distribution shows more appeals to emotions performed by speakers representing right- and left-wing parties, with centrists using emotional appeals less frequently. At the same time, the levels of fear appeal are highest from the speaker from populist right-wing party. These results, while still inconclusive, provide evidence of the effectiveness of the method of automatic language analysis as a tool of comparing emotional appeals of populist and mainstream politicians as well as between different countries. Further analysis (which we will between December 2023 and January 2024) will provide evidence of different audience reactions - especially to attempts at eliciting fear. The overall results will indicate whether various emotional dynamics were utilized for success in the 2023 election between 1) countries near and distant from conflict zones and 2) populists and the mainstream.</p>
11.30-13.00	<p><b>2.5 Exploring Digitally Embedded Worlds: Innovative Methods</b>  <b>Chairs: Nikki Usher, Anna Jupowicz-Ginalska</b></p> <p>Room 1.138</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Adam Balcerzak (University of Warsaw); Tomasz Gackowski (University of Warsaw); Marcin Łączyński (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Methodological challenges of data integration and analysis in multi-sensor biometric research - a multilayer perceptron-based neural network approach (FIFA paradigm)</i></b></p> <p>In recent years biometric measurement tools are becoming increasingly popular in various applications outside their traditional medical field. From fundamental research in sociology and psychology to applied research in design, UI/UX engineering, game design, and service design, those tools are often used as a substitute or supplement to traditional evaluation methodologies. The growth of research interest in biometric research results in a growing number of research projects on particular patterns of human reactions to certain stimuli and the growth of knowledge about biological mechanisms associated with interaction with certain media or devices. The next logical challenge in this developing field is the data integration and inference based on more than one type of human reaction during different games, which want to be comparable in researching and developing a methodology based on a pervasive computing paradigm.</p> <p>In our paper, we present the data integration methodology developed by our team. We discuss challenges in each process stage with sample solutions to data integration problems and a holistic approach to multi-sensor biometric research. The paper is based on a research project conducted using the iMotions biometric platform that was used to gather data from GSR, ECG, and face-tracking sensors in a research project used to determine the patterns of reactions in the e-sport football game FIFA 2018 and 2019. Albeit using the dedicated data recording platform, the first stage of the research was the critical task of integrating data streams from different biometric devices. This stage included a variety of signal processing operations related to synchronizing the frequencies of measurements, as the actual data sampling frequency obtained by each measurement differed significantly due to specific aspects of active test conducted in a live experiment. This problem required the</p>

		<p>decomposition of the initial biometric dataset, a series of transformations to each signal, and the final reintegration of the data.</p> <p>The second stage of the research was related to synchronizing the biometric data with annotations about the gameplay events (i.e. scoring and losing goals, goal celebration) made by human coders and creating a final coherent dataset for further analysis.</p> <p>The third stage of our research was related to the holistic data analysis conducted with a multilayer perceptron-based neural network to identify specific patterns in multi-sensor data regarding players' behavior. This stage included the preliminary exploratory analysis and experiments with various architectures of neural networks used in biometric pattern recognition and description of the game state based on the player reactions.</p> <p>In the paper's conclusions, we focus primarily on methodological and technical challenges typical to the field of pervasive computing that we need to overcome to propose a coherent method of holistic data analysis using multi-sensor biometric measurement.</p>
	<p>Agnieszka Hess (Jagiellonian University); Agnieszka Stępińska (Adam Mickiewicz University); Kinga Adamczewska (Adam Mickiewicz University); Roksana Zdunek (Jagiellonian University)</p>	<p><b><i>How to study an OPINION? Conceptual background and research tools in the international project COST ACTION on What are Opinions? Integrating Theory and Methods for Automatically Analyzing Opinionated Communication</i></b></p> <p>One of the main consequences of rapid developments in digital media is a massive expansion of opportunities for the public expressions of opinions. On the one hand, more people can enjoy their freedom of sharing and gaining information and opinions (Heiss, 2021; Lane, 2020). On the other hand, propaganda and hate speech populate the digital public sphere on the unprecedented scale and scope. Not surprisingly then, numerous scholars have been tracing a flow of information, mis/disinformation, and opinion across social, political, economic, and cultural contexts. While most of the previous studies focused on interpersonal communication and the role of traditional media in spreading opinions and shaping public debates, recent research is devoted predominantly to institutional and personal communication on social media.</p> <p>Still, the analysis of opinions is methodologically and theoretically challenging. As Baden et al. (2021) noted, methodologically, the endeavor suffers from a mismatch between the relatively technical approach to tool development pursued in computational linguistics (Webb Williams et al., 2020; Weber et al., 2018; Kitchin, 2014), and the theoretical complexities inherent in the concept of evaluation in the social sciences. What seems to still missing is a systematic, consensual conceptual framework on what exactly opinions and evaluations are in a communications context.</p> <p>In last decades researchers have mostly addressed components of opinion separately and used mostly manual coding, often in a qualitative paradigm (Boukes et al., 2019). Recent innovations in natural language processing, machine learning and unsupervised text mining, have resulted in a flourishing of computational text-based research (Kitchin, 2014), and new deep learning methods are fueling development in visual research (Constantin et al., 2019). Nevertheless, there are several limitations of the existing computational techniques for automatic measurement of opinion. First, many of tools offer only a superficial view of opinions in online discourse, while others remain limited in their narrow tailoring to very specific kinds of textual contents and to one or few languages. Also, they create new problems of reliability and validity due to the lack transparency and documentation. Furthermore, their exchange and adaptation to different tasks remains a challenge, especially for researchers unfamiliar with common programming languages (van Atteveldt et al., 2019).</p>

		<p>As tools are developed and applied without a clear, theory-based understanding of what exactly constitutes an opinion, many measurements remain superficial and insufficient for drawing valid conclusions about underlying meanings and implications (Salganik, 2018).</p> <p>The aim of this presentation is to provide an overview of the interdisciplinary approach to studies on opinionated communication. This is a ‘work in progress’ of the international team cooperating under the framework of the COST ACTION OPINION: What are Opinions? Integrating Theory and Methods for Automatically Analyzing Opinionated Communication. The Action integrates more than 130 scholars from more than 40 countries, representing many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, as well as the IT researchers.</p> <p>In particular, we are aiming to present the current state of art and key concepts that served as a background for the interdisciplinary integrated approach employed in order to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) integrate and consolidate existing theoretical approaches to conceptualizing opinions,</li> <li>(2) operationalize an advanced, differentiated theoretical notion of opinions toward methodological implementation (definition categorization,) and</li> <li>(3) develop the advanced methods of online media content analysis; the methods are expected to combine advantages of previously used qualitative and quantitative methods (analytical tools mapping).</li> </ol> <p>In this presentation we will report on the outcomes of the project (to date). First, we will share a concept of opinion developed by the international and interdisciplinary research team. Then, we will provide an overview of mapping the existing online tools that have been previously employed in the studies on opinion. Finally, we will discuss challenges and methodological limitations of these tools.</p>
	<p>Giancarlo Manzi (Università degli Studi di Milano); Alessandro Mirone (Università degli Studi di Milano)</p>	<p><b><i>The Digital Space as the Symbolic Field: Computational Analysis of Online Communities’ Practices</i></b></p> <p>Over the course of the last two decades, interactions between individuals of different cultural and socioeconomic background has seen an exponential growth, caused by the rise of the network society [8] and globalization [12]. These phenomena are producing profound effects on society, which are yet to be fully assessed; many scholars have pointed out that, while theoretically enhancing the possibility of creating a more just society, unburdened by nationalism and social inequalities, contemporary societies are in fact replicating and exacerbating socioeconomic fractures [3, 13, 16].</p> <p>In particular, one consequence of the ongoing relationship between individuals’ sense of identity and the use of new media is the effect of homogenization: this term identifies the observed phenomenon of an increasing detachment from individuals’ traditional cultures, or sub-cultures, in favour of new ways of expressing their personality, new ways of thinking themselves and the world around them, and new behaviours: these substitutes do not develop from a gradual change in the cultural structures of origin, but are instead the product of the relationship with the new media; by seeing the world through the lenses of the modern ways of communicating, individuals create new subcultures, that encompass and reflect the power of the hegemonic systems of beliefs, which replicate themselves within the global village [4, 5, 7, 9]. Magnified by the tendency of using these newfound differences in the consumption of cultural products to segment the social space for utilitarian purposes (mainly marketing and security), a practice known in the field of media studies as social sorting [11], this would lead to the emergence of cultures and groups more and more detached from one another, and the polarization of these groups around their newly crafted identities, that is, around their practices of consumption. This line of reasoning sees then the effects of the new media as a powerful centrifugal force that separates individuals in increasingly different communities</p>



despite the observed tendency - in the western world - of the disappearing of traditional class boundaries, at least when it comes to the middle and lower classes [15]

In this context, to be part of a social community means to be attributed an identity; this does not involve merely the consumption of certain products rather than others, but the shaping of the system of beliefs and set of cognitive tools with which individuals interpret and understand reality, and come to form their opinions about the facts of life. Pierre Bourdieu's famous experiment [6] focused on practices, i.e. behaviours, of individuals, in particular on the consumption of cultural products. He concluded that social groups, formed by people with similar determinants, were shaping people's practices just as much as they were shaped by them, in the sense that groups structured their identity – and enacted their influencing (or “self-reproductive”) property through their members' practices. This approach was able to uncover the underlying cultural distinction between groups, based on the inherent systems of values that justify the legitimacy of particular practices for each group, while disallowing other practices that clash with the group's system of beliefs. Adapting Bourdieu's methodology to the digital space allows to investigate the distinction between digital communities based on their inherent hierarchies of values; in this way, it is possible to inquire whether people form bonds on the digital space on the basis of a common set of values.

The key intuition behind the adaptation is to focus on how the symbols implied in communities' members' practices are represented by the members themselves. Representing a symbol means attributing to it some characteristic (“signifiers”), some of which are directly linked to categories of human values (“value-signifiers”). Because (digital) cultural products, like social networks' posts, embed a certain qualified representation of one or more symbols by the author of the product, by observing the level of accordance with such representation it is possible to measure the similarity of the commenting individual's hierarchy of values – which inform the representation of symbols and therefore legitimate or invalidate certain representation of them – with the hierarchy of the author. By knowing how the individuals represented a certain key symbol, i.e. what values are implied in the representation and what worth is being given to these values, it is possible to reconstruct their hierarchy of values, given enough symbols. This epistemology allows to look at the digital space as a “symbolic field”, in which digital communities battle for the legitimacy of their own particular representations of the symbols in what Bourdieu called “symbolic struggle”.

The objective of the analysis is therefore to verify if individuals in the digital space can be distinguished in communities on the basis of their practices of representation, that is, on the basis of their hierarchies of values. Bourdieu's methodology seems particularly apt to this task, thanks to his attention towards practices and how they shape -and are shaped in turn by- the social groups' habitus, i.e. the corpora of the practices and the values that justify them.

In this paper we will present a method to identify digital communities leveraging the original adaptation of Bourdieu's methodology and the usage of computational tools, namely sentiment analysis and Classic Multidimensional Scaling (MDS). While Bourdieu's epistemology has been used in recent works addressing the social segmentation of the digital space [1, 2, 9, 14] the methodology presented here, centered around the exploitation of the aforementioned computational methods of analysis, introduce an element of novelty.

#### **Quantitative Analysis**

The analysis performed in this study consider digital practices (comments) of 5.600 individuals, collected via the social network X, formerly known as Twitter, on the course of 30 days between May and June 2023.

		<p>A total of 29 key symbols (see table 1) were extracted from the most discussed topics in that period (Italian language only). For each respondent, the latest 100 tweets were downloaded and filtered so that only those that involved the representation of four or more of the key symbols were retained. This resulted in a collection of 8934 comments from 1752 users. The VADER lexicon-based model was used to attribute a polarity to each of the tweets, so that each respondent was identified by a vector in R29 (i.e. its representative determinants) indicating its stance towards the key symbols (see table 2).</p> <p>Secondly, there is an actual variability in the data, that, when representing the data in two dimensions, manifests in the separation of the points in two groups along the directions that retain the most variability. This means that there is an actual difference between individuals in terms of representations of the symbols, specifically, in terms of signifieds (and especially in the worth of the signifieds) associated to the attributed value-signifiers of the relevant symbols, (in this case Racism, Fabio Fazio and Giorgia Meloni) i.e. there is a difference between the hierarchy of values of the individuals, at least regarding those value-signifiers associated with those symbols.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>The methodology presented in the paper proved able to identify digital communities on the basis of their members' representative determinants. It can be used to investigate further aspects of the relationship between digital communities membership and individuals' practices; e.g. the dynamic of homogenization in the digital space, the most divisive values in a given culture, the inference on community membership given individuals' digital practices, and more.</p>
	<p>Michele Varini (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano)</p>	<p><b><i>Awaken in dreams. Old and new inequalities in the fashion of the future</i></b></p> <p>Fashion and technological progress have always been two linked fields. The role of fashion in the formation of class distinctions, of imaginaries, the co-production of self-awareness, and the formation and construction of bodies has long been studied. With the advent of new digital technologies, also enabled by the diffusion of technology to ever larger and more varied strata of the population, these dynamics have increased more and more, and show no signs of diminishing. At the same time, the forms taken by the fashion supply chain tout court have multiplied, from production to distribution to creative, artistic, and communicative works. It is well known, and widely testified to in the existing sector literature, that fashion has played a powerful role throughout its history in determining, among other things, physical stereotypes of beauty and gender imaginaries: its role in the formation of imaginaries, in the co-production of self-awareness and in the formation and construction of bodies has long been one of the privileged topics of scholars in the sector. Moreover, another fundamental role of fashion has always been to mark class differences and distinctions, as an ostentatious consumption, as a 'desiderata' that only a privileged few could access, and that only they could properly benefit from. This work, therefore, questions the issues of material inequalities and the representation of the body, where the digital increasingly challenges the boundary between materiality and non-materiality, reality and imagination, canon and new models. A dichotomous distinction, now difficult to apply, is used here in an attempt to go beyond it. Although it is becoming increasingly forced (and less and less hermeneutically precise) to speak in these terms of an increasingly fluid reality whose boundaries are as opaque as ever, terminologically it is complicated to use easily intelligible terms to refer to this new dimension of existence, which could perhaps more accurately be called 'non-thingness'. Virtual play environments stand, from this point of view, as the most frontier fields, because on the one hand, they are increasingly the object of interest by brands, and on the other hand, they are open to the possibility of creation by users, not always following an established canon related to traditional media communication.</p>

		<p>The relationship between fashion, videogames and traditional media is a hybrid one, straddling online and offline, material and 'non-material', reality and fiction, moving, as already mentioned, out of a binary logic, creating a reality ex novo. The research question here is whether the dynamics of constructing imaginaries, defining stereotypes of aesthetic beauty, actions on both "mechanical" and cultural bodies, gender instances, etc. attributed to fashion by the existing literature are replicated in the digital context as well (clearly adapting to or using the tools made available by the platforms themselves in new ways), or whether these dynamics are changing with and because of the action of this new type of fruition of the fashion product, both as a "material object" and as, perhaps increasingly, a "cultural object". Indeed, on the one hand, fashion brands are increasingly interested in experimenting with the use of new technologies; on the other hand, changes due to the pandemic have modified the ways and meanings of consumers' use of digital fashion.</p> <p>To do so, this research employs netnography and visual ethnography, which were used to construct and analyze a data set composed of advertisements and images of video game characters with three peculiarities: this methodological approach responds to the very nature of the object of study: both fashion and videogames have a distinctly visual nature; both of them depend on and live within digital, interconnected and global media contexts.</p> <p>Materials of advertisements and images of game characters conveyed by video games that have three well-defined peculiarities: 1. the possibility of being played online in multiplayer mode; 2. the popularity of the selected platform; 3. the presence of anthropomorphic characters. Thus, the presence of human (or anthropomorphic) characters is crucial for the purposes of this paper. Gaming platforms that match these three characteristics are: 1. League of Legends; 2. Fortnite; 3. Apex Legends; 3. Overwatch; 4. Valorant; 5. PUGB. Each platform has its own characteristic aesthetic codes and imagery, but among them they share at least the three characteristics and selection dynamics that allow them to be grouped within a single "family." Within these platforms, users play the dual role of consumer and producer. They are thus part of the "prosumer culture", and actively contribute to defining representations and ideas referring to the body. However, the content selected for this study is not fan-based. The choice to focus the analysis on advertising and "official" content of these platforms is related to the desire to explore what meanings, representations and images of the body are conveyed by producers in a top-down mode, thus following the communication mode of the traditional fashion channels. However, it is also necessary to emphasize how the role of users is not marginalized to gaming environments: fan-generated productions are also crucial in the creation of top-down media products.</p>
13.00-14.00	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
14.00-14.30	<b>Poster Session (Wine reception)</b>	
	<p>Daniel Barredo Ibáñez (Universidad de Málaga (Spain) / , Fudan University (China)); Laura Barrera Jerez (Universidad de Málaga); Luis Cárcamo Ulloa (Universidad Austral de Chile); Mathieu Vernier (Universidad Austral de Chile)</p>	<p><b><i>The Sustainable Development Goals in the 19 Spanish-speaking Countries: A Comparative Analysis from the Publications of Leading Online Media on Facebook and Instagram</i></b></p> <p>The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) propose the establishment of a global agenda, the implementation of which involves shared responsibility among various political, economic, and social actors. Among these actors, the media play a prominent role due to their key role in the symbolic construction of the transformation suggested by the United Nations (UN) and their pivotal role in the public interaction of other actors involved in it. The media bear a social responsibility to deconstruct imaginaries, contextualize and democratize discourses, challenge macroeconomics and hegemonic power agents, advocate for realistic changes in lifestyle and thought models, and thus go beyond what is known as 'development communication'. In this study, we present a correlational diagnosis of the journalistic treatment of the SDGs by the main media outlets in the 19 Spanish-speaking countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile,</p>

Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela. To create the dataset, we selected all publications made over the past year by approximately 1700 media outlets on their respective pages on two of the most widely used digital social networks in Ibero-America: Facebook and Instagram. This study offers a twofold contribution. From a thematic perspective, it provides a broad overview of information and communication management related to the SDGs in a context marked by profound differences but united by a common language and culture. From a methodological standpoint, it presents a quantitative modeling strategy based on cluster analysis, which may be of interest to other projects seeking to identify general patterns in the formation of public opinion based on large amounts of data.

Adam Balcerzak (University of Warsaw)

***Remote biometrics research on technology companies' ads during COVID-19 pandemic***

This research explores the viability of remote biometric studies, specifically focusing on marketing applications through the integration of web-based eye tracking and the AFFECTIVA emotion analysis algorithm. The study involved 90 participants, categorized as technology enthusiasts (67.78%) and non-enthusiasts (32.22%). The participants engaged in remote sessions, during which their responses and biometric data were recorded. The research encountered challenges, including incomplete sessions due to internet issues and premature browser closures.

The data analysis process involved segmenting participants based on technology interest, exporting survey results, marking areas of interest (AOIs), and generating heatmaps. The study covered five surveys and four advertisements, providing insights into participant preferences and emotional responses.

The results highlighted variations in brand recognition, advertisement likability, and purchase intent among different technology user groups. For the Dell advertisement, 90% of participants recognized the brand, with 71.11% expressing no intent to purchase despite positive feedback. The Microsoft ad achieved a high recognition rate (97.78%), but purchase intent remained low (54.44%). HP's brand recognition stood at 84.44%, and though the ad was liked by 63.33%, a majority (73.33%) had no intent to purchase. The Google ad, with 95.56% brand recognition, garnered positive responses from 61.11%, indicating a potential shift in purchase intent.

Emotion analysis revealed discrepancies between declared emotions and AFFECTIVA measurements. However, AFFECTIVA's neural network achieved a high overall measurement quality of 98%. The eye-tracking component, utilizing webcams, demonstrated surprising effectiveness (70% measurement quality at 24Hz) in capturing participant gaze and interests.

Comparisons with traditional laboratory-based studies were made, emphasizing the advantages of remote research, such as cost and time efficiency. While acknowledging some limitations, including potential lower eye-tracking effectiveness and sampling quality, the study suggests that remote biometric research is a viable alternative for specific applications, such as marketing studies.

The study recommends improvements for future remote studies, including omitting baseline emotion assessments and shortening the experiment duration. Enhancements to the user-friendliness of webcam-based eye tracking, particularly in the calibration process, are also suggested.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the potential of remote biometric studies, emphasizing their practicality for certain applications. Despite challenges, the integration of web-based eye tracking and AFFECTIVA provides valuable insights into participant responses, preferences, and emotional engagement with advertisements. As technology advances, remote biometric research presents a promising avenue for cost-effective and efficient studies, particularly in marketing and consumer behavior research.

Ionel Barbalau (University of Bucharest)

***Myths and symbols in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) public debate***

In 2023, a letter containing 1,800 signatures from the biggest names in technology -including Elon Musk, cognitive scientist Gary Marcus, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, engineers at Amazon, DeepMind, Google, Meta and Microsoft - is reigniting the debate about artificial intelligence.

The structure of public discourse about AI is the object of our study, which analyzes the mythological, symbolic universe of narratives about AI in the media. We follow 2 theoretical dimensions - the interpretation of media narratives about AI through the lens of media anthropology; identifying discursive mythological structures and defining the myth of AI, from the perspective of structural, symbolic, and interpretive anthropology and cultural analysis.

Through qualitative content analysis we will identify the major themes, the dominant symbolic structures of AI narratives, mapping what is the new myth of modernity – the AI myth.

By means of these symbolic constructions, in the context of the preliminary crisis of the debate, AI acquires meaning, being integrated into the collective imaginary.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, media narratives, public discourse, myth, archetypes, anthropology, structuralism, qualitative analysis, constructivism.

Premises

This paper aims to show that the public discourse on AI, analyzed from an anthropological perspective, can be reduced to a series of binary oppositions, similar to those that enter into the structure of myths, and that, ultimately, it is essentially a symbolic, even mythological one. Furthermore, the context introducing AI discourse in the last several years tends to be a one with a high degree of liminality, which breaks the standards of 'normality'.

Our premise is that AI, far from being understood in its essence, far too technical for the general public, and unexpectedly for a "mathematical", "technical" concept, appears to be approached/interpreted/translated/reported/represented, through mass media, and social media, from a mythologizing, sometimes borderline irrational perspective, being presented, for example, either as a universal savior, or as a demon, generator of technological apocalypse, or as the alienator of young generations etc., activating, most of the times, series of binary, archetypal oppositions, in all these discursive constructions.

AI thus becomes itself, in public discourses, a form of "modern cultural myth" (Natale & Ballatore, 2020, p. 3), which recovers in its symbolic structure various forms of "survivals and camouflages" of some archaic mythological structures (Eliade, 1963, apud Lule, 2005), explains the inexplicable, solving the fears of the "urban tribe", being given distinct mythological facets, often even antagonistic/ diametrically opposed.

Just as every time they were confronted with a reality that they could not fully explain, a situation of societal crisis, of liminality, human communities called to ancestral sources generating meaning and order – to myth.

### **Objective and Research Questions**

Our main research objective is the Identification of symbolic constructions in the public discourse about artificial intelligence (AI) in the media (general and scientific popularization publications of English language).

#### **Main research question:**

How is the representation of artificial intelligence (AI) constructed in media?

#### **Specific research questions:**

To what extent can we identify mythological and symbolic constructions in discourses about artificial intelligence in media?

What are the major themes, the dominant symbolic structures of narratives about AI in media?

What are the discursive strategies used to integrate AI concept into the collective imaginary through certain strategies?

### **Corpus**

The top tech gurus' several open letters published by global media during the last decade warning the world against the rise of a powerful artificial intelligence discovery that could either 'threaten humanity' or 'bring great potential benefits', and a selection of relevant media articles covering the open letters announcements (English language global media).

- November 22, 2023 – OpenAI employee's letter

- March 22, 2023 - Future of Life Institute open letter

- January 2015 - Future of Life Institute open letter open letter ("Research Priorities for Robust and Beneficial Artificial Intelligence,")

- 2014 - Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk public positions on "superhuman artificial intelligence"

### **Literature Review**

We will try to analyze the way in which the anthropological research approached the mass media, from the perspective of the symbolic constructions generated - media narratives, news, stories. We will review models of analysis / scientific approaches that have been concerned with the possible existence - coexistence of archetypal, mythological structures, within the narrative, news media and the specific contexts in which they can manifest.

Following the application of anthropological interpretative models inspired by Levi-Strauss and Geertz, we will aim to analyze the way in which the public discourse about AI is prone to reveal archetypal, mythological symbolic structures and patterns and how the concept of AI in public discourse (and the imaginary) it is in fact / has the characteristic features of a modern myth.

We will also try to conceptually define the myth, the narrative, the story, the news, the storyteller. Artificial Intelligence (in its various forms - AI, AGI, GAI, EAI, etc.), also following the studies that addressed the debate about AI from a symbolic perspective.

We will be looking for the "hidden text", the narrative (and mythical) scheme that is behind the "story", the symbolic construction, the media discourse. We will privilege the perspective of the archetypal model, trying to find the springs by which a modern narrative (the journalistic narrative) can become more than it is, at first sight: a vehicle for ancestral fears, carrying answers and explanations destined for the unconscious of a community.

We will compare how myth and journalistic narratives "respond to the same fundamental needs for human existence" (the functionalist paradigm), but are also "the products of the same processes - logical and narrative - common to human techniques of appropriating and signifying the real world" (cognitive paradigm) (Coman, 2003).

Last but not least, we will explain why we can consider news as "a special type of symbolic system": "readers do not consume news as a reflection of reality, but as a symbolic text [...]", being "a type particularly mythological narratives, with their own cultural code, which is recognized by their audiences" (Bird & Dardenne, 1988 apud Coman, 2003, p. 103). "Journalists, like myth-tellers of any age, rely on archetypal stories to make sense of events" (Lule, 2001 apud Coman, 2003, p. 95).

We will privilege the interpretation of these concepts through authors such as Bird (, 1988, 2005), Berkowitz (1997); Donahew (1984), Bennett (1983), Manoff (1986, Lule (2001), Coman (2003).

Furthermore, we will define the concept of myth, archetypal structures, symbol. We will try to synthesize various analysis models of myths, which will support our interpretative approach, from a constructivist-structuralist perspective, which will reveal to us the system, the "syntax" according to which they work and deliver meaning. We will also be interested in the specific context of the appearance and expression of the myth, its different typologies, characteristics, ways of transmission. Last but not least, we will be inspired by approaches to the mythological dimension of mass culture, which consider that the mass media "took over the functions of the institutions that produced and distributed myths and mythologies in archaic societies, that they are keepers and creators of myths" (Coman , 2003, p. 87). According to this approach, which derives from the evolutionary paradigm, "the mass media continue in modernity the functions, contents and social prestige of the myth".

### **Methodology**

Through qualitative content analysis we will identify the major themes, the dominant symbolic structures of AI narratives, mapping what is the new myth of modernity – the AI myth.

### **Expected results**

As a result of an exploratory analysis approach accessing only the titles of the first 20 articles covering the subject of AI (related to the specified context of tech gur us' publicizedopen letters), the symbolic universe of the concept begins to unfold revealing binary oppositions, mythological archetypal structures, "coincidentia oppositorum" - antagonistic bi-polar structures, cultural meta-narratives, master-myths.

Thus AI is "unknown", "a concern", "imminent danger", "unstoppable", "influencer of elections", "destroyer of professions", "replacer of people", AI "fights back", "alters traditions", "can deny you access (to medicine)", "can impact health on a planetary scale", "inspires fear", "amplifies apocalyptic propaganda", is "used in cyberattacks", "global change trigger" etc., but also is a "healer", "not a threat", "protector", "modernizer", "revolutionary", "facilitator", "savior", AI- it "educates", "creates", "revitalizes", "differentiates", "solves", "makes the world safer", etc.

The AI is personalized, humanized, taking on heroic dimensions (positive or negative), being capable of action and generating actions in favor or against humanity, at the same time (re)teaching us "how" cultural or social actions are done (learning, school, arts, interpersonal relations), redefining new taboos, allowing or granting access and, ultimately, being able to punish or "forgive" transgression, provided that new behaviors or characteristics are adopted (eg social credits).

Our analysis will attempt to create a symbolic "map" of these ways of signifying, taking into account the variables that influence their production and perception, the liminal context (Turner) in which this discourse now takes place, the different types of media and audiences.

Katarzyna Bąkowicz (SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities)

***Climate changes: tactics, tools and disinformation campaigns.***

For many years, scientists have been warning us about ongoing climate change. Meanwhile, there is still a large group of people who deny the existence of these changes and question the knowledge provided in this area. As research shows, almost half of Poles declare that they have encountered disinformation regarding climate issues in the last few months, and its main source is the media and politicians. Authors of disinformation content use many tools and methods to interfere in the discourse, including social media. Since Elon Musk became the owner of Twitter, in just one year the amount of content skeptical about climate change has increased by as much as 200,000, and since 2020 this number has quadrupled. The main information tactics mentioned by researchers on the topic include changing the context, i.e. selecting fragments of experts' statements and distorting their meaning by placing them in a changed context. Disinformers also use the discourse of delay, which aims to postpone climate aid actions. The most important role is played by disinformation actors, i.e. a narrow group of anti-experts who create disinformation content. In Poland, 16 such accounts have been defined, the content from which is distributed by 3 subgroups focused on climate disinformation. Actors create almost 70 percent of all disinformation messages in this way.

Knowledge of the techniques used by disinformers and analysis of disinformation campaigns are the basis for creating ways to prevent their harmful impact. Therefore, the aim of the publication is to look at the topic of climate disinformation, to try to answer the question of how the process of creating and distributing content takes place, and what are the mechanisms of social impact of this type of disinformation, and whether it is similar to other types of messages. The adopted methodology is qualitative research of an exploratory and verification nature, including a critical review of the literature in the field of social communication.

The conclusions from the analysis show that climate disinformation is a very serious challenge that modern societies must face. The condition of information plays a key role in this case, and with it the awareness and knowledge related to the phenomenon of disinformation. It is necessary to develop an attitude of responsible communication that can stop the increasing amount of false content. This will not only improve the information ecosystem but, above all, influence climate protection behavior.

Mateusz Czarnecki; Joris Van Ouytsel (Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, Arizona State University)

***Work-in-Progress: Creating a Systematic Framework to Comprehend Individual Vulnerabilities in Cybersecurity Risks***

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to dramatic transitions in cybercrime, including phishing and online fraud. As individuals remained at home, there was an increase in the reported rise of cybercrime in individual households (Lallie et al., 2021), with cybercrime also expanding into new contexts such as healthcare (Perakslis et al., 2023). Cybercrime can have serious and long-lasting financial and emotional consequences for its victims, including anxiety, fear, sadness, and distrust (De Kimpe et al., 2020).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there was also an increase in work-from-home arrangements for many employees. Even after the pandemic, many organizations chose hybrid models for remote work (Petani & Mengis, 2023). This new reality coincides with an era of cyberattacks by foreign groups and heightened threats of corporate espionage (Button & Knickmeier, 2022). While organizations often have robust technical protections, a major vulnerability

lies at the individual level, where employees may be susceptible to cybersecurity risks. In summary, cybercrime poses an increasing threat to both individual households and organizations, especially those increasingly working with employees in hybrid environments.

While cybersecurity frameworks have been developed to understand risks at legal, technical, or organizational levels (e.g., Islam et al., 2019; Nukusheva et al., 2022), few assess the diverse factors that can affect the vulnerability of individuals when confronted with cybercrime risks and individual differences in processing a cybercrime message, such as phishing texts. Gaining better insights into the broader context of cybercrime and understanding what makes certain individuals more vulnerable than others can help in developing more effective e-safety promotion and cybercrime prevention campaigns. To address this gap in the literature, we are in the process of developing an extended framework drawing on various theories. This framework aims to understand the ecology of vulnerability to cybercrime at an individual level. Our work-in-progress paper will present a conceptual model based on a literature review related to cybercrime.

### **Method**

We have chosen to submit this paper as a poster presentation to engage in discussions with conference participants about how to further enhance and expand the framework. Initially, we conducted a systematic search for relevant theoretical frameworks and conceptualizations. Among the relevant frameworks are the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013), the 4D Model of videoconference fatigue (Döring et al., 2022), and classical communication theories on message processing, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2009), and Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975). In the second phase, we categorized the factors affecting an individual's vulnerability to cybercrime into subgroups and subcategories. Currently, in the third phase, we are validating the conceptual framework by reviewing peer-reviewed literature on cybercrime to further assess these factors.

### **Results: Preliminary framework**

The proposed framework comprises five main factors, each contributing to an individual's vulnerability to cybercrime. The preliminary factors identified are as follows:

- 1) Personal factors: These encompass elements that increase an individual's susceptibility to cybercrime, such as dispositional factors (e.g., age, personality characteristics, socioeconomic status, immigration status, unemployment, media literacy, technological skills) and developmental factors (e.g., adolescence, young adulthood).
- 2) Technological factors: These encompass characteristics at both the hardware and software levels, as well as the individual's media use. Key aspects include hardware safety (e.g., using outdated devices), software safety (e.g., using outdated software, having a firewall and security software, factors affecting usability and safety...), and network safety (e.g., security of WiFi connections). Additionally, factors such as the frequency of digital media use and the types of digital content consumed (e.g., engaging with pirated materials, posting personal information that could enable social engineering) are considered.
- 3) Environmental factors: This factor examines the embodied, physical spaces where individuals use technology, both at micro and macro levels. At the micro-level, it includes the physical location of technology use (e.g., leaving devices unsecured in public spaces, living in shared spaces like shelters, hotels, or dormitories). At the macro-level, it addresses societal resources related to cybercrime prevention, such as cybercrime legislation, privacy laws, availability of technological support, and variations in how cybercrime is prosecuted across societies.
- 4) Response state: This mediating factor assesses individual responses when confronted with cybercrime messages, such as phishing or social engineering attempts. In accordance with the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013), this includes cognitive response states (e.g., attention, counterarguing), emotional response states (e.g., affective reactions), and excitative response states (e.g., emotional arousal triggered by the message). The nature of these response states can significantly influence an individual's vulnerability to cybercrime messages.

Discussion: Potential theoretical and practical implications and future directions

Cybercrime, an increasingly critical issue, has been further intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our proposed framework, drawing on communication research methodologies, is among the first to comprehensively address the phenomenon of cybercrime. It holds potential theoretical and practical



implications for understanding communication, especially digital communication, in the post-pandemic era. This framework is designed to elucidate the vulnerabilities of both private individuals and organizational employees, such as remote workers, in various contexts. Moreover, it could offer a resource for designing more effective media literacy and communication strategies to enhance e-safety.

To advance this framework, we are currently utilizing it as a systematic tool for reviewing cybercrime-related literature. This framework paves the way for numerous research opportunities. For instance, it can inform the structuring of expert interviews and serve as a foundation for future empirical studies, both qualitative and quantitative, to delve deeper into the human aspect of cybercrime. The synthesis of insights from literature analysis and expert perspectives is expected to significantly refine and reinforce the framework's applicability and effectiveness.

Sławomir Doległo (Jagiellonian University)

### ***Mediatization of historical memory and communicative practices of postmemory generation in 21st century Poland***

In my research, I attempt to describe a historical memory in a field of communication and media studies. I perceive titular mediatization of memory as histotainment, which refers to current practices of recalling and celebrating the past. I assume that histotainment as a broad media paradigm includes texts and media practices related to the communication of knowledge about the past, in which a selection of modes, signs, codes, content and structure is subordinated to the needs of entertainment (in its commercial dimension) and constitute the basis for emotionally arousing of media users' historical awareness. In my presentation, I want to describe the (re)presentations of mediated memory culture, as well as the communicative practices of young Poles. Using literary connotations I call them the generation of late grandsons and consider them to be people unencumbered by tragic historical experiences, growing up (or born) in the circumstances of parliamentary democracy, European integration and (neo)liberal capitalism, who benefit by freedom that their ancestry was fighting for.

Histotainment is a part of globalized and neoliberal late capitalism, which establishes the contemporary aesthetic canons of pop culture, as well as the media and cultural practices of their users. In my current research I focus on the most important contexts influencing late capitalist circulations of memory. I indicate the causes of the nostalgic turn in contemporary culture, which, apart from philosophical and political retrotopia, manifests itself in the tendency to reach for the past as a source of inspiration and a model for artistic activities. I analyse the most important assumptions regarding the functioning of commodified memory signs, which, due to their similarity to brands and franchises, are carriers of the values of (post)consumer society.

Last but not least, I indicate the political contexts of communication about the past and its influence on civic and patriotic moods.

Main purpose of my poster is to overview selected (re)presentations of mediatized memory culture. My analysis focuses on three categories that directly relate to the practices of mediatization and commodification of the past – (re)constructed, aestheticized and commercialized memory. First of them refers to functioning of narrative museums – in my analysis the Warsaw Upising Museum, which establish current institutional model of communication about the past. I focus on its exhibition strategies and unconventional activities to popularize historical knowledge. The aestheticized memory I present on the basis of recent cinema (re)presentations – *Kamienie na Szaniec* by Robert Gliński and *Miasto 44* by Jan Komasa. In their analysis, I focus on the presentation of historical events, the reception of professional critics, as well as promotional and marketing activities. Finally, the commercialized memory, I show in the context of consumer practices focused on communication about the past, such as wearing patriotic clothing or participating in concerts and historical performances.

In my presentation I also want to indicate some communicative practices of Polish postmemory generation, which I call generation of late grandsons. Despite its literary connotations, this term turns out to be an inspiring sociological category that allows me to study the historical awareness of people unburdened by tragic events from the past, looking at them with an emotional distance, and thus being beneficiaries of cultural and historical heritage. Apart from explicating the concept of 'late grandsons', I want to present the postmemoric experiences of the transformation generation and its attitude to the history of the twentieth century, as well as to education and historical politics. Subsequently, I discuss the media determinants influencing the epistemology and

historical awareness of late grandsons. They actively participate in communication processes and treat the media as an important source of knowledge, lifestyles, personal and aesthetic patterns. Finally, I present the practices of young Poles related to communication about the past and their attitudes towards the previously described (re)constructed, aestheticized and commercialized memory.

Joris Van Ouytsel ( Arizona State University)

***Work-in-progress: Participant Perceptions of a 10-Day Social Media Fast: Can Digital Detox Be an Antidote to Constant Connectivity?***

According to a 2021 PEW Research study, almost 85% of Americans are constantly online (Pew Research Center, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the significance of social media in enabling individuals to sustain their relationships and maintain social contact (Lisita et al., 2020). Although social media facilitates connection with others, many users report experiencing digital stress. This is defined as 'stress resulting from a strong and perhaps almost permanent use of information and communication technology...triggered by permanent access to an inconceivable amount and diversity of (social) content' (Hefner & Vorderer, 2016, p. 237). Experiences of digital stress and constant connectivity have been linked to negative mental health effects, such as depression, stress, and loneliness, among other outcomes (Reinecke et al., 2017).

One of the proposed responses to digital stress is digital detoxes. Although there is no commonly adopted definition of a digital detox, it can be generally summarized as taking a "conscious break from digital media by engaging in explicitly 'non-digital' tasks" (Schmitt et al., 2021, p. 2). Digital detoxes vary in form and may include avoiding the use of smartphones, text messaging, social media platforms, and/or taking breaks from frequently used smartphone applications (Radtke et al., 2022). Digital detoxes often promise participants more meaningful social interactions and the rediscovery of genuine self-expression. They also focus on reducing the "information overload" individuals may experience when using social media (Syvertsen & Enli, 2019; Steele et al., 2020).

Digital detoxes can vary significantly in duration, ranging from as short as two days to month-long commitments (Radtke et al., 2022). However, the effects and perceptions of participants, especially regarding the perceived well-being benefits and challenges of longer digital detoxes (i.e., more than a week), are not well-understood. This study aims to address these gaps in the literature by analyzing data on the perceived benefits and challenges collected from a sample of women who volunteered for a 10-day social media fast.

**Method**

**Participants and procedures**

The data for this project was collected through an online Qualtrics survey that focused on women who had participated in a ten-day social media fast. After data cleaning, the final sample consisted of 360 women. All participants were over 18 years old and lived in the United States. On average, the participants had completed their social media fast 11 days prior to participating in the survey, with a range of 1 day to 30 days (Mdays = 11.34 days; SD = 6.64). All participants owned a smartphone and 98.1% had a cell phone plan that included mobile data (e.g., 4G/LTE). The participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and that their participation was voluntary.

**Measures**

The data that are presented in this study are part of a larger questionnaire that included close-ended questions and open-ended questions about their experiences with the social media fast. In this paper we will analyze the open-ended survey questions that asked: 1) the benefits they experienced from their most recent social media fast, 2) the difficulties they encountered during this fast, 3) any negative effects they perceived during the fast, and 4) the first action they took when logging back onto social media after their fast concluded.

**Data analysis**

For this work-in-progress submission, we are currently engaged in data analysis using NVivo 12. Preliminary results for the first open-ended question, which focused on the benefits of a social media fast, have already been obtained. Analysis of the responses to the other questions is ongoing and will be completed by the time of the conference. The qualitative data were analyzed by the authors using thematic analysis. Initially, the researchers thoroughly read the responses to gain familiarity with their content. Subsequently, an open coding procedure was applied to these responses. From this coding of the first

question, five common benefits emerged in the open-ended responses. This abstract presents the preliminary results for the first open-ended question. By the time of the conference, we anticipate having analyzed the remaining open-ended questions.

### **Results**

While the full dataset encompasses a broader variety of questions currently under analysis, these preliminary findings offer insightful impressions of the perceived benefits of a digital detox. Overall, participants identified five main benefits from engaging in a social media fast:

'Devoting Time to Loved Ones': A common perceived benefit was spending more time with friends and family, with an emphasis on the increased quantity of time devoted to others.

'Feeling More Present with Loved Ones': Many participants who noted more time spent with loved ones also highlighted an improvement in the quality of these interactions.

'Increased Productivity': Respondents further perceived being more productive, completing more tasks related to work, school, or household maintenance.

'Less Social Comparison': Another perceived benefit was the reduction in the perceived pressure to compare their lives with those seen on social media.

'Less Overall Stress and Anxiety': Participants reported feeling less stressed and/or anxious, attributing this to a reduced need to manage the pace and volume of content on social media.

### **Discussion**

Although a more in-depth analysis is needed for a fuller understanding of the benefits and challenges of a digital detox, these initial results suggest that such a break can be a helpful period for individuals to become more aware of their digital usage patterns and effects. Instead of viewing a detox solely as a means to quickly boost mental health and counteract the negative effects of digital stress, these findings tentatively suggest that digital detoxes might be more effectively used as tools for reflecting on one's media use.

There are some limitations to consider in interpreting these results. The homogeneity of the sample may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should include diverse samples in terms of gender identities and cultural backgrounds to better understand the experiences with social media fasts and detoxes. Additionally, the self-selection of the sample might mean those who participated had particularly negative or positive experiences with their social media fast, potentially influencing their perceptions. By the time of the conference the data analysis will be completed and we will be able to discuss the implications of digital detoxes for post-COVID media consumption and outline directions for future research.

Łukasz Przybysz (University of Warsaw)

### ***This is what duty entails: AI, public relations, and ethics***

Artificial intelligence (AI) is expanding the potential available to the communication, public relations, and marketing industries. AI marketing blends technology with customer and brand data, allowing for a better understanding of consumer experience and market trends (Chacko, 2023). Artificial intelligence improves team efficiency and is altering the landscape of professional communication (Gomez, 2023). 61% of public relations professionals report employing AI technologies (Muck Rack, 2023). Artificial intelligence aids in the management and monitoring of communications, the identification of possible crises, and the generation of content (Rodsevich, 2023). Will public relations professionals be replaced by automation? They are now required to plan ahead and develop ways to improve customer service using artificial intelligence (Guarneri, 2023). Although it was recognised in 2018 that only 12% of the 52 skills typical of public relations professionals could be supplemented or replaced by artificial intelligence, predictions for 2023 already included 38% (CIPR, 2023). The key principles of using artificial intelligence tools and capabilities in public relations are to: acquire knowledge in the field of AI, define threats and problems at the intersection of AI and public relations, identify ethical issues and apply professionalism principles, as well as make responsible and ethical decisions (CIPR, 2020). As a result, the public relations industry's environment is revolutionising, forcing it to adjust. In the midst of constant change and novelty, one should take refuge in unchangeable, universal, and timeless ideals (Global Alliance, n.d.). In my speech, I discuss the ethical, professional, and responsible aspects of the interaction between public relations and artificial intelligence. I look at the benefits and drawbacks of employing AI tools in public relations.

Nikki Usher (University of San Diego)

***The Speculative Turn in Political Communication: Theoretical and Empirical Departures for the End of the Anthropocene***

The information disorder of contemporary political communication has already pushed the limits of the subfield's ability to model outside the presumptive good citizen. But a new frontier of unreasonability and deception is on the horizon: the presence of non-human, generative AI in digital political communication. The sheer democratization of the capacity for the public to engage with generative AI in 2022 and 2023, from ChatGPT to Bing to image creation AI such as Dall-E and Midjourney has changed the scale of this conversation. The democratization of computational actors that pass the Turing test brings into full relief the decreasing centrality of the power of human agency and human governance. This paper argues for a speculative turn in political communication: that we must think broadly about these fundamental shifts in human agency as a departure point for theorizing, generating hypotheses and research questions, and empirical scholarship. More specifically, we argue that the discourse around real and imagined forms of artificial intelligence surface a critical challenge for political communication: how can we think differently about a world where humanity is not the alpha and omega for empirical and theoretical work on media and politics?

To push this question forward, this paper offers a theoretical intervention and aims to introduce two concepts from literature to inform empirical and theoretical departures in communication, and specifically political communication: speculative fiction and "the end of the Anthropocene." In literature, speculative fiction is an orientation more so than a genre: literature that probes the possibility of the impossible within a narrative arc (Gill, 2013). The end of the Anthropocene is an increasingly influential intellectual departure point for theorizing in the humanities more generally (Szerszynski, 2012). The "end of the Anthropocene" can be understood as the end of the "Age of Man," with "man" rather than the gender neutral "human" often signaling the end of the era of white, western, male dominance. While interdisciplinary scholarship between literature/literary studies and political communication is uncommon, in part because of the lack of empirical tradition in fiction—which by definition is not real in that it did not happen—both speculative fiction and the end of the Anthropocene hold promise for future empirical research.

This paper will examine how literary examples from this genre of speculative fiction can push us to reconsider our theoretical and empirical approaches in three major areas of current political communication inquiry: changes in the legitimation of expertise and authority; news, information, and entertainment seeking; empirical research via experiments about social behavior. Using literary texts as data, I turn to works such as Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*, Cline's (2011) *Ready Player One*, Older's (2016) *Infomocracy*, Asimov's "Franchise," (1955), HBO's *Westworld*, and *Minority Report*, a 1956 short story by Philip K. Dick and a 2002 film starring Tom Cruise to explore these questions of authority and expertise, news and information seeking, and modeling human behavior to predict future decisions – particularly around media exposure/consumption and political activity.

In contemporary humanistic thought, the end of the Anthropocene inspires a diverse range of research trajectories. In some cases, this might mean turning to animals to retell the history of a people, a place, or a nation in a new way, for example, displacing humans from the center of stories about the past (Horn and Bergthaller, 2019). For other scholars, this approach means focusing on the power of the natural world, our environment, as posing a challenge to humanity's survival that, for all our ingenuity, we may be unable to reason and to invent our way out of (Austin, 2017). In other cases, "the end of Anthropocene" literally becomes a stand in for end of the age of man, with "man" imagined as the rational, freely choosing white man reasoning his way through choices and maximizing the utility of his happiness (Maslin and Lewis, 2018). As Haraway writes in "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" (1985) :

In a sense, the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense—a "final" irony since the cyborg is also the awful apocalyptic telos of the "West's" escalating dominations of abstract individuation, an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space...

The union of machine and human does not have to end in nihilism, but instead, can lead to redemption and revolution.

This paper argues, then, that a speculative turn prompts us to consider what sustained environmental catastrophe might mean for media, politics, and humanity more generally, and argue that an emancipatory vision of alternative forms of governance exist in fiction, particularly communitarian ethos and decentering white patriarchy – and might be better used to inform our aspirational models – what the world could be rather than what it might be. Political theory was once articulated in fictions about dystopias, eutopias, and utopias – imaginaries of alternate modalities, both good and bad, that sought to

	<p>articulate how humans might reimagine governance, individuality, social order, and self-actualization. This history has faded into the domain of subfield theory but retains important contemporary relevance to imagine other possible futures (Pfetsch et. al. 1992). In particular, I look to afrofuturism and Octavia Butler’s Parable of the Sower (1993) as a departure point for unsettling normative presumptions about how politics might work. Consider speculative Afrofuturism, which radically decanters whiteness, and in doing so, dislodges the normative foundations from which most of contemporary social organizing flows (Larkin, 2022). If political communication takes seriously the end of the Anthropocene, scholars can decenter whiteness, colonialism, and even humans from the consensus view of reality, akin to the social critique and world building seen in speculative fiction.</p> <p>Thus far, most of the communication scholarship around AI, media, and politics have focused on information disorder, with scholars worrying about the potential of generative AI and adversarial networks to manipulate political communication, with Deep Fake videos gaining some of the earliest scholarly attention (Yadav &amp; Salmani, 2019). The new potential for so-called “influence operations” or organized efforts by state or non-state actors to manipulate public opinion and democratic processes through generative AI has quite appropriately raised concern (see Goldstein et. al, 2023). These challenges may unsettle social trust and breed cynicism more generally, as Vaccari and Chadwick (2020). However, early prognosticators only focused on influence operations are thinking too narrowly about generative AI. Jungherr (2023) for example, argues that we need to focus on “actually existing AI” rather than the “imaginary artificial intelligence able to autonomously perceive, reason, decide, and act in varying human or super human activities.” He dismisses such inquires as “speculative fiction, which has little correspondence with AI-based systems currently deployed or AI lab research.”</p> <p>Indeed, this call to turn to two concepts from literary studies to inform political communication is an untraditional approach to reimagining how politics and media might change with the specter of yet another revolutionary. However, it is a necessary one, in part because it is so very different. Gill (2013) writes, a “speculative representation of what would happen had the actual chain of causes or the matrix of reality- conditions been replaced with other conditions.” This is “in contrast with the operational rules of the normal world.” Speculative fiction from both past literature, from More’s Utopia to Voltaire’s Candide to Dante’s Inferno to contemporary fiction such as Atwood’s, Butler’s, or Le Guinn’s, represents a “literary form with theorizing at its heart,” and which invites the reader of the text to engage in “contemplation about social and political issues” (c.f. Stock, 2021). Speculative fiction offers more than just imaginaries of dystopian annihilation of the human species. Rather, it offers a vision of the future that is fundamentally emancipatory even amid the myriad challenges that will continue to face humanity---and from these fictional texts and from a post-humanist approach to thinking about the potential for (and challenges to) democratic life, a nontraditional, interdisciplinary approach is required to stretch our imagination into a world that up to this point has only been imagined in fiction.</p>	
14.30-16.15	<p><b>2.6 Media and Their Audiences during Covid-19*</b>  <b>Chairs: Weronika Świerczyńska-Głownia, Agnieszka Szymańska</b></p> <p>Auditorium</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Tanja Oblak Črnič (University of Ljubljana);Dejan Jontes (University of Ljubljana)</p>	<p><b><i>From Dispersed News Seekers to Platform Minimalists: News Consumption of Young Audience within the Pandemic Crisis</i></b></p> <p>Several studies on the media repertoires of young people show some overarching trends. At the same time, research confirms that young people do not assign media to specific functions, but use platforms multifunctionally, especially as they get older (Wimmer &amp; Wurm, 2021). More narrowly, some studies show that the development of information media resembles a patchwork process in which not only peer groups but also family and school environments are important contextual factors. However, such media constellations are not fixed and unchangeable formations. Pandemic closure in this sense brought</p>

severe destabilization of everyday routines and many of them were intensively translated into online contexts, also for the kids (Oblak & Brečko, 2022). Ytre-Arne (2019) argues that understanding biographical change in everyday life is central to understanding changing media use, where the media repertoire model, with its attention to everyday media use and social figurations, is valuable for understanding how biographical events might affect media use. The disruptions, however, reach beyond Covid crisis and are linked to the characteristics of social media in general. Consequently, to understand young audiences, the technological specificity and uses of a medium are not as important as the conceptualisation of digital media as an integrated communicative environment. Their sociability is based on permanent activity and affective engagement and is framed by the algorithmically produced regime of visibility and the promise of liveness on the platforms.

The concept of media repertoires—specifically, news repertoires—has been at the forefront of research on the choices of audiences in complex media environments in the last 15 years (Edgerly et al., 2018; Edgerly & Vraga, 2020; Peters et al., 2022; Wimmer & Wurm, 2021). Cross-sectional media research has gained new momentum also due to Couldry and Hepp's (2017) thesis on deep mediatization, and this research has further popularised media repertoires, which highlight the importance of the interconnected configuration of media (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012). More importantly, resisting permanent social media engagement, which has become an important factor in news consumption of this age group, represents a practice of distinction and an ideological statement. However, Bucher (2020) argued that this choice is no longer a viable option because our ontological conditions imply a techno-social existence, and even absence provides platform algorithms with important information about the person abstaining. Moreover, since the logics of datafication and predictive analytics make it difficult to opt out of digital platforms and services, "refusing to connect or temporarily opt[ing] out is a form of connection too" (Bucher, 2020, pp. 610–611).

With the above-mentioned theoretical considerations and context, the paper aims to focus on the research question, what were the main characteristics of news repertoires of young audiences in the context of destabilized everyday life. More narrowly, the aim of the paper is to critically investigate, how such biographical disruption on the one hand and specific communication environment within several media platforms on the other affected news consumption among the teens.

In searching for the answers, the paper refers to the results of a mixed method approach to media repertoires among the youth: first, the news media habits are presented, based on a qualitative focus groups method on a sample of 67 teenagers from 12 to 19 years old, which was conducted within the second wave of Covid-19 epidemic closure in 2021 in Slovenia. The media mapping method complements the data in group interviews with information at an individual level. Inspiration for it comes from previous discussions (see e.g. Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012), which examine methodological approaches for exploring media repertoires and communication configurations in deeply-mediated everyday life (Hepp, 2019). Each participant draw their own personal media network and categorised personal media choices as a response to five different questions: Which media 1) are the most important; 2) are used for information gathering; 3) are preferable for keeping contacts and socialising; 4) are for fun, relaxation and free time and 5) are for creating, making or expressing themselves. Mapping is a replacement for media diaries, which research shows to be ineffective among children and teenagers, or less reliable (see Kirsh, 2010). Photos of the sketches were forwarded via Zoom or email.

Analysis of youth's personal media sketches for the entire sample of 59 sketches, provides us with insight at many levels: which media or devices are most important to teenage youth in general, and which are the most important for their information seeking. Even a preliminary cross-section analysis of media sketches suggests that media preferences mask complex relationships within the generation.

1. Distant learning as news seeking: The first block or group consists of those respondents, who positioned their primary news access to two platforms for online learning, namely MS Teams or Zoom. This means that their understanding of being informed is in major sense related to school obligations and tasks. "News" for this group is not so much related to a concrete public media event, but more to their own primary "care", that is school. This was relevant for a small group of girls attending primary or secondary school, which far from the others inform themselves through distant learning tools. In this sense it is a very homogeneous - girlish – and niche news repertoire.

2. Cross-social media news repertoire: The second repertoire belong to a larger group of mostly high-school students, who are totally different from the first group as they highly prefer three very specific and very much diverse online tools: Discord, Google and Instagram. However, similarly to the first group, they never mentioned the phone as a single device for news seeking.

3. YouTube fans: The third news repertoire is in contrast much more narrowly structured as it belongs to those students who prefer one single and very concrete media platform or channel – namely, the YouTube. This very special news repertoire belongs primarily to boys from primary schools, who on the other hand are not the fans of Snapchat or FB messenger. Their personal news consumption relay on one channel only; that is the reason why we proposed to name them YouTube fans.

4. Snapchat lovers: In a way similar, but in relation to concrete media platform very different is the fourth group, which consist of primarily high-school students, who highly prefer Snapchat as a news resource.

5. Phone as a device for news: Fifth, and very specific type of news repertoires seems to belong to girls, coming primarily from high schools. Their main difference to all the previous ones is that instead of a certain platform, concrete portal or online tool, they are internally similar in choosing a concrete device as the most wanted news channel: namely, all together they mentioned their phone as the most important news device.

6. Dispersed news seekers: The last and the largest group seem to consist of younger girls, who mostly come from primary school. In their media preferences and online tools, they seem to be "dispersed all around". Their news consumption is diverse in the sense that they are, in comparison to previous types, not consistently attached to a singular medium or concrete combination of devices and tools.

A mere preliminary cross-sectional data analysis of media sketches implies that complex relationships are hidden in the background of the selected preferences. Here, the educational context already hints at the specifics of media choice, but cross-sectional analysis is needed along with data within family domains, even if these are relatively homogeneous in our sample. However, our findings also confirm, at least in part, the results of previous research on news repertoires and information behaviour. For example, Prandner and Glatz's (2021) quantitative study of the Austrian population showed it's only younger people who are online-only users (2022, p. 61), representing a small minority within the general population whose news consumption depends only on online platforms. A Danish study (Peters et al., 2022) identified five different news repertoires among young adults: the online traditionalist, the in-depth audiophile, the digital news seeker, the interpersonal networker and the non-news information seeker, all of whom rely heavily on several new media platforms, which on the one hand undermines the importance of traditional news media players, but on the other hand also shows that, apart from Facebook, other social media such as YouTube, Instagram and Twitter/X are not important sources of information. Since young people start to develop their news habits in early adolescence (Buckingham, 2000; Marchi, 2012; Russo & Stattin, 2017), the understanding of their news consumption within specific social contexts can also explain an anticipation of their future news and media habits (LaRose, 2010; Peil & Spaviero, 2017). Therefore, such findings bring also some practical

		<p>implications, especially in relation to the educational practices and the perceived importance of digital competences for the youth. The findings that online platforms do not introduce new regimes of social boundaries but enhance the existing distinctions in cultural practices should be considered also in educational policies, especially on the level of the curriculum for digital media education.</p>
	<p>Weronika Saran (Jagiellonian University), Magdalena Hodalska (Jagiellonian University)</p>	<p><b><i>Dr. Wise on Influenza in light of the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Model</i></b>  Dr. Wise on Influenza (1919) is a film made during the Spanish flu pandemic to educate British citizens about the disease and encourage them to take preventive measures. The aim of this paper is to analyse the film in light of the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Model (CERC) designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help health communicators and leaders of organisations communicate effectively in crisis situations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, world leaders and health organisations used new forms of communication to reach people during the lockdown, thereby contributing to the advancement of technology. This paper aims to proceed in the opposite direction, i.e., to examine how the new medium of the 20th century – cinema – was used for health education despite its technological limitations. The authors will analyse how Dr. Wise on Influenza attempted (both on a visual and narrative level) to persuade viewers to take appropriate precautions during the greatest health crisis of the 20th century and examine whether and to what extent the elements of effective crisis communication can be found in the film from the Spanish flu pandemic era. To verify the following hypothesis – elements of effective crisis communication designed in the 21st century can be found in the film made in 1919 – the authors used an interdisciplinary approach combining film analysis with the principles of crisis and emergency risk communication.  Keywords: health crisis, pandemic, health education, cinema, crisis communication</p>
	<p>Katarzyna Iwanicka (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Exploring the role of fear of missing out in coping and risk-taking among alcohol use disorder and general young adult populations</i></b>  <b>1. Introduction</b>  Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is widespread among the younger population and leads to significant negative consequences across different aspects of life (Elhai et al., 2021; Jupowicz-Ginalska et al., 2021). Individuals characterized by pronounced FOMO encounter a plethora of adverse feelings, such as depressive symptoms and anxiety, and may adopt diverse strategies to manage these sentiments (Dempsey et al., 2019; Elhai et al., 2020). This research posits that those with elevated FOMO frequently resort to maladaptive stress-coping mechanisms, with a specific emphasis on an increased propensity to alcohol consumption. This study directs its attention towards both the broader demographic of young adults and a clinical cohort undergoing treatment for alcohol use disorder (AUD).  There is a positive relationship between FOMO and stress (Adams et al., 2020; Adrian, K., &amp; Sahrani, R. 2021). Research has shown that people with high FOMO less frequently use active coping strategies such as behavioral activity and engagement to deal with negative emotions (Elhai et al., 2016). For the purpose of this study, we focus in particular on maladaptive coping strategy that takes into account the use of psychoactive substances, e.g. alcohol. FOMO is associated with increased alcohol consumption per session, suffering more severe consequences because of its abuse (Riordan et al., 2015), as well as greater typical weekly alcohol consumption and a lower age of onset (McKee et al., 2022).  Individuals with AUD are a particularly vulnerable population due to their low distress tolerance, which is why FOMO may have an especially strong effect on them (Zaorska, et al., 2023). Research shows that AUD patients use non-adaptive coping strategies, such as those focused on emotions or avoidance, significantly more often than the general population (Ribadier &amp;</p>



Varescon, 2019). In our research, we would like to investigate whether and to what extent FOMO can explain, why individuals with AUD reach for these maladaptive strategies, in particular alcohol-related coping strategy (alcohol coping). People experiencing unsatisfied psychological needs, which is a key feature of FOMO, may try to look for some alternative ways to fill these emotional demands, sometimes even hazardous ones (not only covering drinking habits, but the health domain in general). Hence, this makes them more prone to get involved in risky behaviors. FOMO has a direct positive significant impact on risk-taking travel behaviors (Mohanani, & Shekhar, 2021), distracted driving (Przybylski et al., 2013), traditional gambling and stock market trading domains (Song, 2022) or academic misconduct (McKee et al., 2022). Also, people struggling with addictions are more prone to various forms of risk-taking (Dahne et al., 2013). However, until now, the role of FOMO in taking health risks, especially in people with AUD, has remained unknown.

## **2. The current study**

In the current study, we aimed to investigate the role of FOMO in alcohol-related coping strategy and health risk-taking among a clinical sample of AUD patients, and a general cohort of young adults. Studies have shown that a high level of FOMO is associated with various adverse traits, emotions, and behaviors (e.g. Milyavskaya et al., 2018; Przybylski et al., 2013; Sekścińska & Jaworska, 2022). Thus, it seems that FOMO, as an anxiety-based trait, promotes maladaptive emotions and behaviors. Research showed that FOMO is positively associated with alcohol consumption (Riordan et al., 2019). However, so far there have been no studies that would investigate the level of FOMO in a clinical group, nor the role of FOMO in explaining the maladaptive behaviors of people with AUD.

Based on the existing literature, we expected that:

H1. FOMO is a positive predictor of alcohol-related coping strategy in a general sample.

H2. FOMO is a positive predictor of alcohol-related coping strategy in a clinical sample.

H3. FOMO is a positive predictor of health risk-taking in a clinical sample.

### **2.1. Methods**

#### **2.1.1. Participants and procedure**

356 young adults from a general population (175 females;  $M = 26.9$ ;  $SD = 4.9$ ) and 72 clinical patients with AUD (53 females;  $M = 40.83$ ;  $SD = 11.23$ ) took part in our studies. Study 1 on the general population was conducted on a research participant panel as a part of a larger survey. The remaining part of the survey was not related to the subject of this study, and it did not affect the results. Participants were rewarded points that could be exchanged for prizes from the panel store. Clinical patients for Study 2 were recruited through posts on private social media support groups for people in AUD treatment.

Both studies were approved by the Ethics Board of the Faculty of Psychology University of Warsaw.

### **3. Results**

The descriptive statistics can be found in Supplementary Material. Results of Person's  $r$  correlation analysis have indicated significant positive correlations between FOMO and alcohol coping in both studied groups (Study 1 general sample:  $r = 0.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Study 2 clinical sample:  $r = 0.35$ ,  $p = .004$ ). Moreover, FOMO positively correlates with health risk-taking in Study 2 ( $r = 0.36$ ,  $p = .003$ ). All correlations are presented in Table 1.

#### **3.1. Study 1: General sample of young adults**

To examine the role of FOMO and demographic variables in alcohol coping a linear regression analysis was conducted with age, gender (dummy coding, female = 1), FOMO as IV, and alcohol coping as DV. The proposed model is significant ( $F(3, 352)$

		<p>= 31.19; R2 = .21, p &lt; .001). Results have shown that FOMO is a positive predictor of alcohol coping ( = .42; p &lt; .001), which confirms H1. The detailed results are presented in Table 2.</p> <p>3.2. Study 2: Clinical sample</p> <p>To examine the role of FOMO and demographic variables in alcohol coping in a clinical sample, we have conducted a linear regression analysis with age, gender (dummy coding, female = 1), FOMO as IV, and alcohol coping as DV. The proposed model is significant (F (3, 61) = 5.09; R2 = .20; p &lt; .001). Results have shown that FOMO is a positive predictor of alcohol coping ( = .28; p = .025), which confirms H2.</p> <p>Next, to examine the role of FOMO and demographic variables in a tendency towards risk-taking in the domain of health and safety, another linear regression was conducted with age, gender (dummy coding, female = 1), FOMO as IV, and health risk as DV. The proposed model is significant (F (3, 61) = 4.29; R2 = .17, p = .008). Results have shown that FOMO is a positive predictor of health risk-taking ( = .42; p &lt; .001), which confirms H3. The detailed results are presented in Table 2.</p> <p><b>4. Discussion</b></p> <p>Our primary objective in this project was to examine, how FOMO contributes to alcohol-related coping strategy and the propensity for health risk-taking behaviors. This investigation encompassed both a clinical group consisting of individuals with AUD and a broader population of young adults. The results have confirmed our hypotheses, revealing a positive predictive role of FOMO in alcohol-related coping strategy among both examined groups. Additionally, FOMO was identified as a positive predictor of engaging in health risk-taking behaviors among individuals with AUD.</p> <p>Our findings are in line with studies showing the link between FOMO and alcohol consumption (e.g., Riordan et al., 2015). The originality of our study lies in the fact that it included the population of people with AUD. Our results also confirm the reports of Wolkowicz et al. (2023), which showed that FOMO was associated with the patients' experience of alcohol craving. It can therefore be assumed that, following Self-Determination Theory, FOMO is related to the unsatisfied basic needs, fulfillment of which is crucial for an individual's well-being. The frustration of this need, in turn, causes tension, which might turn into alcohol craving among AUD patients. Brunborg et al (2022) obtained results showing that adolescents with higher FOMO have greater risk of binge-drinking, explaining this relationship, by the fact that FOMO is associated with low mood and negative affect. Therefore, poor mental health may be a cofounder of reaching for alcohol to self-soothing.</p> <p>The obtained results allow for some comparisons between the general population struggling with FOMO and AUD patients. First, in both studied samples FOMO was a significant positive predictor of alcohol coping. Notably, this effect was more pronounced in the general sample. The discovery that FOMO played a significant role in both samples is a novel and noteworthy finding, aligning with the SDT framework. Up to this point, researchers had hypothesized that FOMO was linked to alcohol consumption primarily due to external social influences, which is a reasonable assumption in the context of young adults (Riordan et al., 2021). However, our observations regarding the role of FOMO in the sample of individuals with AUD, where age was not a significant factor, suggest that internal, self-regulatory motives may also underlie the influence of FOMO on alcohol coping. Nevertheless, it remains a subject for future research to directly examine whether, in the case of individuals with AUD, FOMO is specific to social situations related to alcohol consumption, potentially termed as "alcohol-related FOMO" or ALFOMO (Al Abri, 2017).</p>
	<p>Imke Henkel (Birkbeck); Tim Markham (Birkbeck)</p>	<p><b><i>Yearning for the greater good: A case study of democratic qualities of UK and German news media and audiences during Covid</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction and literature review</b></p>

The popular belief that good journalism is indispensable for a healthy democracy, and in turn democracy is needed for good journalism (Carey, 1996), has dominated journalism scholarship throughout the 20th century (Ryfe, 2020). News media, according to this prevailing view, fulfil the essential democratic function of providing accurate information that enables citizens to participate in politics on the basis of well-informed rational decisions (Habermas, 1962; 2006) and furthers “a forum for public discourse” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014, 197), holding the powerful to account.

Consequently, enquiries into how democracy benefits from journalism – or not – have predominantly focused on how journalism delivers information and on its failure to do so, investigating “information pathologies” (Culloty & Suiter, 2021) such as disinformation, lack of trust, and news avoidance (Bennett & Livingston, 2018; de Bruin et al., 2021; Toff et al., 2021). Particularly digital news media have been studied in terms of the risks digitisation poses for democracy. Research focussed, for instance, on the effects of a fractured public sphere in high-choice media environments (Bennett & Pfetsch, 2018), and on journalists’ “loss of their monopoly on the informational and power-scrutinizing role” (Esser & Neuberger, 2019, 196). Other studies investigated phenomena such as apathy towards news (Prior, 2007), and the effects of incidental news exposure in the digital space (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018). More general studies have explored a whole list of concerns about the democratic function of online news linked to the loss of a common exposure to public-affairs media that traditional media environments once used to provide (van Aelst et al., 2017).

However, while studying such pathologies that harm news’ democratic function, research has rarely interrogated the assumed democratic value that supposedly has been lost through the ills of the digital news environment. This paper aims to help fill this gap.

The starting point for our study is the acknowledgment that there is more to news than informing citizens to enable democratic participation.

We build, instead, on emerging research into a more complex functionality of news. News has been shown to engage affectively beyond the structured expression of opinion or information (Papacharissi, 2015); to report, perform, and elicit emotions (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019); to present dramatic action that audiences observe like a play (Carey, 1999); to act as moral educator that cultivates “cosmopolitan sensibilities” (Chouliaraki, 2008, 831); to evoke imagined identities revealing as much about the reporter who “draws” a picture of the object as about the object itself (Chernobrov, 2021); and, more generally, to shape our mediatized political and ethical being (Markham, 2020).

Empirical research has, furthermore, questioned an oversimplified link between news consumption and democratic participation by drawing a more complex picture of how engaging with news facilitates public connection (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2010). Furthermore, a recent study found that news avoidance, far from being bad for a healthy democracy, in contrast can lead to more civic engagement (Ohme et al., 2022).

This paper aims to explore news’ democratic function beyond the widespread reductionist model that considers news only in terms of its information pay-offs and as an instrument to hold the powerful to account. Instead, this study aims to investigate empirically the rich breadth of qualities through which news contributes to and facilitates democratic life. It does so from two angles: the actual news stories published on digital news sites, and the audiences exposed to this news. Moreover, our paper studies how a variety of news qualities contribute to life in two close but still different democracies: the UK and Germany.

Consequently, we formulate the following research questions:

RQ1 What qualities can be found in digital news stories that are relevant for democratic life?

RQ2 What responses to news can be found with audiences that are relevant for democratic life?

RQ3 How do news qualities and audiences' responses to news that are relevant for democratic life differ in the UK and Germany?

**Data and methodology**

As a case study, we analyse news stories that were published on mainstream 'elite' websites during Covid-19. We selected the time of the pandemic because it represents a well-defined common experience. In addition, Covid-19 posed a tough test for democracy's ability to respond (Greer et al., 2020; Karabulut et al., 2021) and consequently to news' role in a challenged democracy.

News publishers experienced a marked rise in news consumption during Covid (van Aelst et al., 2021). Particularly legacy news brands saw increased popularity (Nguyen et al., 2021; Nielsen et al., 2020; Ofcom, 2021, May 25). Moreover, audiences appeared to show renewed trust in news organisations as sources of reliable information during the Covid-19 crisis (Nielsen et al., 2020; Ofcom, 2020, November 17).

Furthermore, our study focusses on so-called "quality" or "elite" news outlets because these are generally perceived to be the most trustworthy and accurate news, assumed to escape the ills of news in digitised high-fractured news environments. 'Elite' media thus present a positive model for democratically valuable news (e.g., Cushion, 2022; Toff et al., 2021). We focus on the digital news sites rather than print media because the constraints during Covid-19 have accelerated the turn towards digital media platforms (Newman et al., 2020).

Finally, we compare news websites in two different western democracies, the UK and Germany, drawing on previous research that found notable differences in how UK and German journalists view their political and societal role (Henkel et al., 2019).

We selected the following news websites in the UK and in Germany: BBC News, Der Spiegel, Die Zeit, Focus Online (in lieu of discontinued BuzzFeed News DE in 2021), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Independent (in lieu of discontinued BuzzFeed News UK in 2021), Süddeutsche Zeitung, Tagesschau, The Guardian, The Telegraph, and The Times. As digital native news sites we selected Buzzfeed News UK, Buzzfeed News DE (both only in 2020 before they were discontinued) and HuffPost UK.

We collected the top four news items from the homepages of these sites on seven consecutive days around noon as a proxy for what editors (or content management systems) at this time considered the most important stories. We collected these items during the two weeks between 26 April and 2 May 2020 and between 3 and 9 February 2021 (N=672), the first 2020 week was the time around the beginning of the first lockdown in both countries, the 2021 marked the beginning of the vaccination.

We recruited four focus groups of people who regularly consume one or several of the elite news sites in our text corpus, two in each country (UK and Germany), using convenience and snowball sampling. Each focus group consisted of five or six members. The age range spread between people in their 20ies to people in their 80ies, with most participants being in their 40ies and 50ies; genders were equally distributed; while all participants had a university education, they came from a broader range of social backgrounds, including, for example, participants who were the first ones in their family to go to university to participants that came from a family where university education was common through several generations.

We chose Grounded Theory for the analysis of both news texts and focus group transcripts because it affords an open-minded approach most suitable for our research questions (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2021).

**First Findings**

Applying Grounded Theory coding, we found the following emerging themes:

		<p>1) Some news texts, notably on public service news media such as BBC News, construct an imagined community with their audience, employing a number of structural and semantical means including the assumption of shared knowledge about people such as prominent politicians or institutions, shared emotional experience such as grief during Covid, shared spatial experience about places or what is considered 'home'. Other news media, notably digital-born news such as BuzzFeed, instead speak to fractured audiences.</p> <p>2) Audiences refute the assumption of a shared community with reporters, instead often perceiving journalists as 'others' who cannot be trusted to report truthfully – while at the same time using news media to participate in what is implicitly assumed to be a shared world.</p> <p>3) Many news media, again most notably public-service news media, construct an ordered world through applying temporal structures of a better past, fearful present and hoped-for future or through structurally enacting social hierarchies, for example by quoting senior politicians or experts more prominently. Again, digital-born news media, such as HuffPost, do not or far less apply such implicit hierarchical structures.</p> <p>4) Audiences show a strong interest in using news media to educate themselves beyond imminent usefulness, imagining a 'shared world' that they feel they need to know.</p> <p>5) Audiences show a strong sense of their own positionality (displaying self-criticism of being trapped in their own 'filter bubble'), which again speaks to an imagined 'shared world'</p> <p>6) News routines are felt by most focus group participants to be an essential part of daily life – as well as a limitation (one's own 'echo chamber').</p> <p>These first findings speak to an imagined greater social good, constitutive for democracies, that news media and news audiences equally – but differently – yearn.</p>
*Organized in cooperation with CEECOM / ECREA CEE Network		
14.30-16.15	<p><b>2.7 Social Media: Interactive Communication Network or Black Mirror?</b></p> <p>Room 1.120</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Dorith Yosef (Ariel University); Azi Lev-on (Ariel University)</p>	<p><b><i>Genealogy in Social Media: Navigating Time and Space</i></b></p> <p>This paper explores the burgeoning phenomenon of genealogy-based online communities within the context of social media, driven by a growing interest in reconstructing family histories and preserving cultural legacies. Drawing from the theory of Knowledge Co-Creation, we present a unique conceptual framework that categorizes the content in these communities, focusing on two crucial axes: "Time," which captures the evolving nature of participants' involvement from immediate family history to broader ancestral and communal history, and "Space," which delves into the interplay between online interactions and offline activities. To illustrate the applicability of this framework, we present a case study of a WhatsApp community dedicated to collaborative research on the descendants of annihilated Jewish communities in Upper Silesia, Poland. This paper contributes to the understanding of online genealogy communities and offers insights into their dynamics.</p> <p>Keywords: Genealogy, Social media, Online communities, Knowledge Co-Creation theory.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p>

Online genealogy communities have gained significant traction as people increasingly use digital platforms to uncover family histories and preserve cultural and societal legacies. These communities, where like-minded individuals gather to explore their roots, represent a thriving niche within the broader landscape of social media. This paper delves into the dynamics of these communities, offering a conceptual framework that categorizes their content and investigates the evolving nature of participant engagement.

Genealogy, as the study and tracing of family lineage based on historical, social, community, geographical, and cultural information, has a rich history. It is rooted in the Greek words "genea" (generation or family) and "logos" (study) and encompasses the exploration of family history and the documentation of significant life events. While genealogy has long been a cherished pastime, the rise of digital platforms has transformed it into a global phenomenon, making it more accessible to a broader audience (Yakel, 2004).

Genealogy enthusiasts now have a plethora of online resources at their disposal, including search engines, directory sites, social media platforms, online family trees, and digitized historical records. These platforms have democratized genealogical research and created a global community of amateur genealogists (Family Search, 2023). The popularity of online genealogy is evident from the staggering number of users on websites like Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, and MyHeritage.com, and the presence of thousands of genealogy-based groups on social media platforms (Edwards, 2022; Vita Brevis, 2023).

Despite the significance of these online genealogy communities, there is a notable gap in rigorous research that comprehensively explores their content and dynamics. This paper aims to bridge that gap by presenting a conceptual categorization framework and a case study that sheds light on the intricate process of reconstructing family histories within these communities.

#### **The Theory of Co-Creation of Knowledge and Online Communities**

This study is grounded in the theory of Knowledge Co-Creation, which posits that online communities create a trilateral ecosystem involving people, technology, and information. Within this ecosystem, interactions generate collective creativity and collaborative knowledge. The internet has transformed knowledge co-creation by breaking geographical barriers and enabling real-time global collaboration. Online platforms and social media have become conduits for diverse information practices, fostering extensive discourse within thematic domains (Lloyd & Olsson, 2019; Chen et al., 2017).

#### **Genealogy and its Digital Transformations**

Genealogy, rooted in the study and preservation of family histories, has undergone a digital transformation with the advent of online resources. While genealogy enthusiasts once relied on physical archives and libraries, they now have access to vast databases, online family trees, and DNA testing services. This digital shift has made genealogy more accessible to a broader audience and transformed it from a leisurely pursuit into a "serious leisure activity" for many (Fulton, 2016; Pugh, 2017).

Smartphone-based messaging services like WhatsApp have become integral to modern communication. WhatsApp's wide usage and global reach make it a significant platform for online communities. With its capacity for group communication, multimedia sharing, and real-time conversations, WhatsApp serves as an ideal space for niche communities like genealogy enthusiasts (Seufert et al., 2015).

#### **Research Environment: Trauma-Affected Jewish Communities**

Online communities play a pivotal role in the reconstruction of social identities, particularly within trauma-affected populations. These communities serve as digital archives for preserving past lives, contributing to a digital renaissance

(Author). While there is a substantial body of research on digitally engaged traumatized communities, little systematic exploration has been done to categorize their activities within a conceptual framework. This study aims to fill that gap. The case study presented in this paper focuses on the Upper Silesia Jewish community, which endured the horrors of the Holocaust. This community, which was dispersed across the globe, actively uses online platforms to reconnect, remember, and preserve the cultural and historical legacies of annihilated Jewish communities. The WhatsApp community studied here is dedicated to researching the descendants of these communities, spanning various aspects of their history, culture, and lineage.

#### **Originality and Contribution**

This paper offers a novel perspective on online genealogy communities by providing a comprehensive conceptual categorization framework. It moves beyond mere description and delves into the thematic engagements within these communities, addressing a notable gap in existing literature. Additionally, the focus on a less-explored platform like WhatsApp broadens the scope of academic inquiry in this field, providing a more holistic understanding of how genealogical communities operate in various online environments.

#### **Method**

The paper's methodology is grounded in Grounded Theory, involving systematic data collection and analysis. Data collection efforts spanned a year, following Grounded Theory principles to uncover patterns and relationships within the dataset. The study population consists of members of the Upper Silesia WhatsApp community, chosen for its prominence in terms of membership and engagement.

Data collection involved transcribing WhatsApp chat data and systematically analyzing the conversations, categorizing them based on recurring themes and topics. The analysis process involved coding and data categorization, focusing on genealogy-related posts while excluding personal or social content. The resultant categorization framework was developed based on empirical insights from the dataset.

This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the activities within online genealogy communities, providing a valuable contribution to the field.

#### **The conceptual Framework**

The framework comprises two pivotal axes: Time and Space. The Time axis elucidates the evolving nature of participants' engagement, commencing with immediate family history and extending to a broader interest in ancestral and communal history of the past. This axis consists of four distinct themes: Present-Day Insights, Post-War (Present to 1945), Holocaust-Era (1945-1939), and WWII to Late 18th Century. These themes provide a structured framework for categorizing and understanding the diverse discussions and interactions within the community.

The Space axis emphasizes the interplay between online and offline activities, focusing on the transition of physical objects and offline initiatives to the online space and vice versa. This axis comprises two essential themes: Objects Transitioning from Offline to Online and Projects Transitioning from Online to Offline Space. These themes underscore the dynamic and collaborative nature of the community's efforts to preserve and reconstruct historical and cultural legacies.

The framework's significance lies in its structured approach to analyze and categorize the rich and diverse content within genealogy-based online communities. By mapping activities and discussions onto the framework's axes and themes, researchers and enthusiasts can gain a deeper understanding of evolving interests, engagement patterns, and knowledge co-creation dynamics.

		<p>In conclusion, the introduced conceptual categorization framework offers a structured and systematic approach to understanding the multifaceted content of genealogy-based online communities. It has the potential to advance research in the field, enabling a more comprehensive exploration of knowledge co-creation processes and the preservation of historical and cultural heritage within these communities. As genealogy thrives in the digital age, this framework provides a valuable tool for scholars, genealogists, and enthusiasts.</p>
	<p>Piotr Siuda (Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz); Mikko Aaltonen (University of Eastern Finland); Angus Bancroft (The University of Edinburgh); Ari Haasio (Seinäjäki University of Applied Sciences); Tuomas J. Harviainen (Tampere University); Juha Nurmi (Tampere University); Haitao Shi (The University of Edinburgh); Leszek Świeca (Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz)</p>	<p><b><i>Comparing Drug Trade on Tor in Finnish, Polish, and English Speaking Cultures</i></b>  <b>Introduction</b>  This article examines localized differences in online dark web drug trading with examples from three countries. The dark web has, over the last few years, been a vital channel in drug trading, having provided various types of sites for the purpose (Demant et al., 2018; Martin et al., 2020). Using multiple method analyses, this article demonstrates that local drug culture, differences in site access, sites' architecture, and drug availability all influence how trading is conducted and determine the site's character. These differences call for new, broader variance in the study of drug trading. We aim to provide a research agenda for that purpose and present examples of measures to find new relevant data on the topic.  In the present article, we provide examples of why it is essential to fill this research gap. We ask how the Polish, Finnish, and English-language markets differ, considering variables associated with measuring drug trading on the dark web. What are the most significant distinctions between these drug trade cultures, and what are the implications of those distinctions for further research? We selected the sites in question based on their prominence in the local markets.  <b>The Studied Sites and the Methodology</b>  <b>Tsatti (Finnish)</b>  A total of 1,500 messages were scraped from the Finnish onion website Tsatti (<a href="http://tsattickdplsh2i2xqzlybvreiuppgoqscmzkrotuudnk7h665ukgid.onion/">http://tsattickdplsh2i2xqzlybvreiuppgoqscmzkrotuudnk7h665ukgid.onion/</a>; see Figure 1.) using web crawlers. We collected these in November and December of 2022 and converted these HTML web pages to text format (using the Python html2text library). We further processed the Finnish chat discussion messages into JSON format, each representing a single JSON file with all metadata. For data extraction, we wrote Python software with regular expression rules and ad hoc language checks that broadly matched users' nicknames, Session IDs, and sales articles. We manually verified the extracted data for the sales messages. Nine hundred seventy-seven messages were drug advertisements with 358 unique nicknames for vendors. The material was further analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative content analysis.  <b>Cebulka (Polish)</b>  Cebulka (<a href="http://cebulka7uxchnbpvmqapg5pfos4ngaxglsktzvha7a5rigndghvadeyd.onion/">http://cebulka7uxchnbpvmqapg5pfos4ngaxglsktzvha7a5rigndghvadeyd.onion/</a>; see Figure 2.) is a board/forum with threads open by vendors and a given vendor may use several posts to sell different kinds of drugs or use only one thread for all types. If the given post concerns many offers, the comments below refer to all (positive or negative experiences with a vendor) or a particular substance bought. 965 advertisement pages from Cebulka were scraped in January 2023. 336 threads/posts from the collected pages were identified as associated with the illicit drug trade, with 165 unique vendors' handles. Using MaxQDA software, we assigned categories to offers and comments and analyzed the data. Some natural language processing (NLP) word frequency analysis was also implemented.  <b>Nemesis (English)</b>  The data from Nemesis market (<a href="http://nemesis555nchzn2dogee6mlc7xxgeeshqirmh3yzn4lo5cnd4s5a4yd.onion/">http://nemesis555nchzn2dogee6mlc7xxgeeshqirmh3yzn4lo5cnd4s5a4yd.onion/</a>; see Figure 3.), which offers illegal products, was scraped in January 2023 comprising 607 posts on drug sales. We cleaned the data and</p>



put them into a data frame as a CSV file. Tidyverse packages were used in R to delete irrelevant files (i.e., those without the keyword “drug”), and regular expressions were used to extract useful information from the remaining files. Missing values were handled, and all files were saved in a tidy format as a CSV file. This served for both the quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

#### Findings and Discussion

In this section, we present findings from each of the sites. Given that their structures are partially similar but not entirely alike, we have presented elements that can be compared and idiosyncratic factors (e.g., whether discussion exists, as opposed to the site consisting of mostly or entirely of just transactions) that require differentiation. These are all parts of the differentiation, as well as—we believe—key reasons why more thorough research into local-language Tor sites is needed. The number of posts with a given substance sold for all sites is presented in Tables 1 to 3 (the names of drugs are not unified).

#### Finland: Tsatti

The vendors typically specialize in one type of substance, as 71 percent sell only one type, 17 percent sell two, and only a few sell more than four different substances. The sellers who are most likely to specialize are the ones selling MDMA (65 percent of vendors selling one substance only) and cannabis (58 percent), whereas vendors selling mushrooms (28 percent), opioids (32 percent), and cocaine (33 percent) are more likely to sell other substances, as well (see Figure 4. for network analysis of which drugs are sold more often together). While some vendors post advertisements in different regions of Finland, 64 percent only sell in one geographic area. Some sell in two (15 percent) or three (12 percent) regions, but only a few nicknames appear in more than five different regions. The regions with the highest number of unique handles are the cities in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

Tsatti is a site that contains some drug culture discussions in addition to trading, although to a much smaller degree than many earlier Finnish sites (Haasio et al., 2020; Hämäläinen et al., 2021). The discussions are practically solely focused on the drug trade. Cultural discussion and the sharing of one’s own experiences about problems other than drug dealing are almost entirely missing. Four main themes can be distinguished from the materials represented in the messages. These are “marketing,” “security,” “location,” and the “quality of the products.”

#### Poland: Cebulka

For both cannabis and prescription drugs, the vendors seem highly specialized. Correlations indicating which drugs are sold more often together are visualized in Figure 5. According to these, the vendors seem to focus either on cannabis, prescription drugs, or all other drugs.

Comments in any given post are essential to evaluating a particular vendor; users eagerly share their experiences, including describing their mental states, trips, or hallucinations, assessing the taste, smell, structure, appearance, or consistency of the drug, shipping time, etc. (for the importance of trust and drug quality see Bancroft, 2020; Bancroft & Scott Reid, 2016; Bilgrei, 2018). One might say that Cebulka has two layers. The analyzed posts are transactional, and users mostly care about the process of buying drugs being unproblematic, security, and quality of goods, and vendors focus on these issues. The first and dominant layer is, therefore, the transactional one.

This does not mean, however, that the social/cultural dimensions are absent. Some comments allow the exchange of information, experiences, and drug knowledge. Additionally, the comments on offers can often link to side threads from Cebulka’s other sections focused solely on discussing drugs. Cebulka could then be seen as more complicated than a pure trading platform. When considering buying drugs, it is open and inclusive. However, a more profound level can be seen, i.e.,

		<p>exclusive and accessed by users interested in sharing their opinions and with strict hierarchies based on positive reviews, the number of drugs sold or bought, and the general forum activity.</p> <p>England: Nemesis</p> <p>Nemesis is purely transaction-oriented, with little emphasis on discussing drugs and their effects. Thus, reviewing a given vendor might seem particularly important (it is vital for Cebulka). The correlation between the number of reviews and sales is the strongest, with a coefficient of 0.646 (see Figure 6.). The correlation between the number of reviews and the rating is weak, with a coefficient of 0.148. The correlation between the number of sales and the vendor drug rating is also weak, with a coefficient of 0.138. This indicates that rating may not significantly impact the increase in sales, unlike Tsatti and Cebulka, where discussing the quality of drugs is essential. Nemesis is thus even more transactional.</p> <p>Also, unlike Tsatti and Cebulka, Nemesis is international (probably due to the market being in the English language). In summary, the sending and destination locations vary for different drug types. Some drugs circulate primarily within specific regions, while others circulate globally. However, the distribution of vendors appears to be concentrated within the UK and EU regions, with sporadic presence of US-based vendors (see Figure 7.).</p> <p><b>Conclusions</b></p> <p>Our research shows that sharing fact-based information and focusing on trading are the most essential things on analyzed dark web sites. Cultural talk about issues and experiences related to use and drugs, in general, has largely moved to other forums, with the Polish site being the one with these discussions being most prominent and Nemesis being purely transactional.</p> <p>The comparison made in this study only applies to dark web sites in the compared countries. It must be remembered that depending on the drug culture, in some countries, drug dealing on precise web services such as Snapchat, Reddit, Telegram, Signal, etc., is relatively common (Bakken &amp; Harder, 2023; Demant et al., 2019), unlike in, e.g., Finland.</p> <p>The present research has some limitations, i.e., limited data sample size and the time frame for data collection spanning differently. Trading was ongoing during these periods, and variables such as ratings, the number of sales, and reviews were constantly changing. These changes could impact the statistical data and comparisons.</p>
	<p>Gerta Lokaj (University of Zurich); Eszter Hargittai (University of Zurich); Sara Pfeuti (University of Zurich)</p>	<p><b><i>User Understanding of YouTube's Algorithm</i></b></p> <p>As one of the most popular online platforms, YouTube's algorithm plays a tremendous role in allocating user attention. To what extent do people understand how the video system works? Based on interviews with 83 adults of all ages in four European countries (Bosnia, Germany, Hungary, Serbia) and the United States, this paper examines the extent to which people are aware that YouTube collects personal information about them and whether they understand how this links to recommendations the system makes both in terms of videos and particular advertisements. The paper shows that there is considerable variation in algorithm skills with some people having very little understanding of how the system works. The variation in algorithm skills suggests a potential crisis in equitable access to desired content.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Online experiences are increasingly shaped by algorithms operating in the background. However, details about how these processes work are not public (Introna &amp; Nissenbaum, 2000) with even experts often struggling to fully comprehend how the systems work (Milmo, 2023).</p> <p>Algorithm skills are the combination of awareness that customization happens while using systems and an understanding of the underlying processes (Gruber &amp; Hargittai, 2023). Differences in people's awareness and understanding of how these</p>

systems operate have led to inequalities in how people make use of Internet applications and the benefits they may reap from it (Büchi et al., 2018; Hargittai, 2007; Litt, 2013). This paper links to the conference theme on “Technologies in social life – a solution or another crisis?” as it investigates with data from four European countries plus the United States to what extent users have agency when interacting with one of the most popular online services: YouTube.

### **Related Literature**

Numerous studies have explored how individuals interpret the workings of such systems for a variety of services and platforms (e.g. Bucher, 2017; DeVito et al., 2017; Eslami et al., 2015; Klawitter & Hargittai, 2018; Siles et al., 2019, 2020). Although video sites like YouTube and TikTok are some of the most popular online properties, relatively little work has investigated what users understand about how these services work. This is the gap in the literature that this paper addresses.

Research focusing on YouTube has shed light on users’ engagement with the platform’s algorithms and their effort to understand and navigate the recommendation system. Some studies have explored how people who create content for YouTube understand its algorithms (Bishop, 2019; Bucher, 2018; Cotter, 2022). Work has shown that users who also produce and share content would engage in discussions with others to try and make sense of the YouTube algorithm (Bishop, 2019; Cotter, 2022).

A few studies also focus on YouTube users’ perspective. Alvarado et al. (2020) interviewed 18 middle-aged adults about their beliefs concerning factors that influence YouTube’s recommendation system. Respondents’ beliefs were informed by their past behavior, what they learned about others’ behavior on social media, the time and location of video consumption, and the platform’s policies. Sued (2022) investigated how 45 students at Mexican universities interact with YouTube’s algorithm. The study found that those who develop “intuitive theories” about the platform are more likely to be pro-active in making the algorithm work for them. Ha and colleagues (2022) analyzed a survey of 524 students in Saudi Arabia to find that the more a user wanted to avoid ads, the more they would comply with YouTube’s recommended videos and watch those as a strategy to minimize exposure to advertisement segments.

The goal of this study is to expand the countries in which related research has taken place and answer the following questions:

RQ1: To what extent are people aware that YouTube collects their personal information?

RQ2: To what extent are people aware of algorithmic selection processes on YouTube?

RQ3: To what extent do people understand that there is a connection between algorithmic selection processes and personal information collection?

### **Methods**

To investigate people’s awareness and understanding of personal information collection and algorithmic selection processes on video watching sites we conducted 83 semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of adults in five countries: United States (28), Germany (22), Bosnia (13), Hungary (11), Serbia (9). We recruited respondents starting with our social network and expanded through snowball sampling, making sure to interview roughly equal numbers of men and women and to cover a wide range of ages (18+). Following the interviews, we asked respondents to fill out a questionnaire, which included basic demographic information as well as questions to measure their Internet experiences and skills (Hargittai & Hsieh, 2012). The

sample is diverse concerning participants' digital skills and sociodemographics, although it is slightly biased towards a more educated group.

We intentionally refrained from using the term “algorithm” both during the recruitment process and throughout the interview to prevent introducing any potential bias both in who signed up for the study and how participants talked about the processes they encountered. We asked participants about their experiences with video sites, which in all cases except two was primarily YouTube. We asked respondents why they think the videos that show up are the ones they see, who they think their information is shared with, and whether this impacts their usage behavior. Lastly, we probed participants about their awareness and understanding of algorithmically selected advertisement based on their personal information.

To analyze the data, one author identified quotes in which participants expressed awareness and understanding of personal information collection and algorithmic selection processes using a codebook derived inductively from the interview material. We adjusted codes throughout the analysis and added new codes whenever new elements appeared in the material. During the analysis process, the team regularly discussed codes and emerging main themes.

### **Findings**

The vast majority of participants were aware that their personal information was being collected, ranging from the information they provided the service, such as name and email, to the extensive tracking of their online activity. Only a small number of participants expressed no knowledge of any information being collected or doubted that YouTube had information about them if they did not provide the service with any. The most mentioned types of information collected were their interests inferred from their search history and watching behavior. Participants who mentioned a connection between YouTube and Google were particularly aware of the extent to which their online activity was being tracked.

To assess participants' awareness of algorithmic selection processes in a next step, we asked participants why they think YouTube showed them certain content as well as why they thought they see particular advertisements. Participants expressed their awareness primarily by sharing examples of experiences they had with YouTube and other platforms. Some participants had no idea why they saw those recommendations on YouTube and showed no awareness of any personalized selection processes happening. Some made more general assumptions such as the content they see on the homepage being generally popular or currently trending on the platform. There were many participants, however, who recognized that the recommendations are personalized in the sense that their previous behavior on the platform influenced them, such as their watch and search behavior, or because of their personal interests. Some participants who showed high awareness mentioned the term “algorithm”, but some used other words such as “system” or “machine” when describing the processes behind video and ad recommendations. It is notable that awareness of video recommendations did not necessarily translate to awareness of ad selection. Some participants expressed an aversion to paying any attention to ads or they perceived them to be random rather than personalized.

We then assessed whether and to what extent participants understood that the algorithmically selected recommendations are based on their personal information. Of course, the participants that had no awareness of their content being algorithmically selected or that YouTube collected their personal information did not make a connection. However, participants with high levels of awareness understood that their personal information impacted the recommendations they received. Many made connections to their Google accounts and search history as factors influencing the content they saw. There were also cases of participants understanding that YouTube tailored content to their interests or watch behavior, yet

		<p>this did not necessarily translate into understanding that their interests or watch behavior is being collected about them as they did not mention it when asked what YouTube knew about them.</p> <p>Similarly, understanding personalized ads varied, with participants with low levels of awareness of algorithmic selection processes also not making the link to personal information collection. Some other participants showed higher understanding although they did not always explicitly notice this link between ads and personal information based on their YouTube use; rather, they drew on their experiences using other services such as Facebook. Overall, participants with high awareness of algorithmic selection processes also understood that it is based on their personal information. Lastly, although we did not ask directly, some participants with moderate to high awareness and understanding of personal information collection and algorithmic selection processes shared some strategies to improve their experiences using YouTube such as anonymous browsing or installing ad blockers, using VPN or Tor.</p>
14.30-16.15	<p><b>2.8 ECREA: There Are Two Sides to Every Story: Perceptions of AI and Its Influence on Us</b>  <b>Chairs: Caja Thimm, Tomasz Gackowski</b></p> <p>Room 1.128</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Jacek Wasilewski (University of Warsaw); Jacek Kowalski (Neuroidea); Beata Pawłowska (Neuroidea)</p>	<p><b><i>Advertisements Created by AI – Revolution or Threat? An Analysis of the Reception of Advertisements Created by Humans and AI</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction:</b>  The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has led to the development of new advertising technologies that can generate creative content that is indistinguishable from human-created content. This raises the question of whether audience emotions are affected by whether they know that an ad was created by a human or an AI. In this study, we experimented to investigate this question. We showed participants a series of ads and measured their reactions. We also split the group of respondents into two subgroups. In one, we showed them all the ads (both AI-generated and human-made ones) and informed participants that AI created the ads. In the second one, we showed the same ads and did not provide information about the creator of the ads.</p> <p><b>Study purpose</b>  The study aims to examine whether there are differences in the perception of visual advertisements created by humans and by AI and whether the knowledge that humans or AI create the advertisement affects respondents' perception.</p> <p>Conceptual framework  As technologies continue to conquer the digitalization of our world, several theoretical models have been proposed to study the users' adoption of new technologies. There was the innovation diffusion model (Rogers, 1962); the technology acceptance model (TAM, Davis, 1989) and its extensions (e.g., Venkatesh &amp; Bala, 2008; Venkatesh &amp; Davis, 2000); unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, &amp; Davis, 2003). TAM seems to be a commonly used model to understand the individual acceptance of emerging information and communication technologies (Kesharwani &amp; Bisht, 2012; Kim &amp; Shin, 2015). The model postulates that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are two cognitive belief</p>

dimensions that shape the (potential) users' attitude, which then determines intention to use and actual use. Our proposal in the context of research conducted by authors is that from the recipient's point of view dimension of usefulness could be defined as a dimension of being treated with sincerity. If there is a mechanical voice – or anything not alive – as an interlocutor, the interaction could be perceived as a lame act of persuasion. According to the Act of speech theory (Austin 1962, Searle 1969), the conditions of the speech acts are: 1. The context must be correct. 2. The participants must occupy certain roles. 3. Specific linguistic acts must be performed. 4. Certain responses must be elicited from the other participants. 5. The linguistic act must be performed sincerely. The last point as a mechanical activity could be responsible for lower ratings of commercials made by AI.

We can also refer here to the Game theory, which reveals mechanisms of situations in which decision markers interact (Osborne, 2004). A notable study enabled by this theory is the work of Mathur and Reichling (2016) which examined human–robot interactions in an investment game. They found that while classic elements of human social psychology govern human–robot social interaction, robust uncanny valley effects as android faces become more human than mechanical, they began to be perceived as unlikeable until the point where faces became nearly human, in which case likability will decrease. In the Game theory we can accept a brief time of generating instructions and information by AI (quick win game), by persuasion and commercials is kind of different 'social game' and auditory may require a 'real' process of preparing commercial to be treated fair in communication (relationship game). We can compare it to the reaction of mechanical courtship.

#### **Research questions**

There were two research questions. One concerns physical reactions to commercials, and the second one concerns ratings of commercials by respondents.

Q1 Will consumers accept advertisements created by AI at the same level as those created by humans:

- presenting humans
- presenting animals
- presenting food products

Q2 Does the information that the advertisements are prepared by AI (regardless of who created them) change respondents' perceptions?

#### **Methodological details**

A set of images collected from advertisements for products of brands that were little known to the respondents was created, so that the attitude towards the brand itself did not affect their reaction to the advertisements. Using the AI program, images for the advertisements were created structurally similar to the images on the previously created advertisements. Then there was created a second set of advertisements corresponding to those ads created before. First, a pilot of eight advertisements (4 x AI; 4 x REAL) was conducted, during which biometric data from the respondents and their declarations on the evaluation of the advertisements (IDI) were collected. Then, after corrections, there was conducted the main study [(N=60), 2 study conditions, 24 advertisements (12 x AI; 12 x REAL)].

Biometric measurements were taken, and face-tracking - monitoring of facial movements - revealed the emotions of the respondents while watching the ads. The intensity of emotional reactions (mimic expressions) to the presented materials was recorded and measured with the FaceReader application offered by Noldus. Respondents' faces were recorded with a high-quality camera, and then the application analyzed each frame of the recording. A 500-point grid was placed on the image of a face and the application measured the tension of forty-four face muscles, calculating changes in distances between selected

		<p>grid points, resulting from muscle tension. The data are related to the Facial Action Coding System (developed by Ekman and Friesen (1978) and systematized for six basic emotions: anger, joy, sadness, fear, disgust, and surprise). Finally, Face Reader offered information on the type and intensity of emotions experienced in contact with the stimulus.</p> <p>Set of researched 24 commercials from the main study:</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>Q1. How do respondents emotionally react to images in advertisements created by humans and by AI?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respondents accept the model - a human in an advertisement created by AI, moreover - in some cases, a human being a model created by AI can evoke the same or stronger positive emotions than the actual one.</li> <li>2. Pictures of real and those created by AI were accepted by respondents equally, but animals created by AI can engage more strongly emotionally.</li> <li>3. The reaction to products created by AI and real products is an individual matter. Both a rational approach and emotions matter. For some, an object created by AI may be better, for others, the real product remains better. The ratings were very even.</li> </ol> <p>Q2 Does the information that the advertisements are prepared by AI change respondents' perceptions?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness that the advertisement created by AI negatively affects its rational perception and emotional reception if there are people in it.</li> <li>2. Awareness that an advertisement with animals is created by AI can lead to stronger emotional engagement but does not affect rational assessments.</li> <li>3. Awareness that there is a product generated by AI in the advertisement, not a real one, lowers the rational assessments of the advertisement but does not affect its emotional reception.</li> </ol> <p>In the discussion, we intend to argue how each theory explains the obtained results. The TAM theory allows us to infer the norm of using mechanical creation for persuasion. The question is: whether this norm is the same for images of humans, animals, and products. Speech act theory will justify whether mechanical communication can be effective, and therefore whether AI is perceived as an autonomous entity or just a tool of the proper sender. Game theory will show whether the situation of receiving an advertisement is a language game in which AI can be perceived as a full-fledged player.</p>
	<p>Camelia Cusnir (University of Bucharest); Anamaria Nicola (University of Bucharest)</p>	<p><b><i>Using AI in Communication: a practitioners' approach</i></b></p> <p>The controversy about the emergence of ChatGPT, the extent of AI development, and its societal impact has reignited the debate about the influence of emerging technologies across various sectors encompassing Communication and PR. This study explores the Romanian PR community's perception about AI use in their activities, using a qualitative approach to offer a comprehensive understanding for our previous quantitative approach of the topic. Our semi-structured interviews (n=16) with Communication specialists explored the use of AI, the favourite AI applications for their work. The study also explores their perceptions of the impact of AI on the PR profession and delves into ethical considerations surrounding its use.</p> <p><b>**Key words:</b> Artificial Intelligence (AI), Public Relations, PR practitioners, Communication Specialists, ChatGPT</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>ChatGPT has been hailed for its ability to understand natural language and generate human-like responses, but it has also raised concerns. These concerns usually point to ethical implications, the reproduction of harmful content, privacy violations, biased training data. In the Romanian public space, ChatGPT was mostly discussed for its entertaining capabilities as well as in relation with concerns about its non-ethical use in academic context.</p>

Public relations is among the professions that have been radically transformed by the appearance of the Internet and, subsequently, Social Media

The term “artificial intelligence” (AI) dates from 1956 but it’s considered to be booming nowadays. Some AI definitions describe it as “the ability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human-like understanding” (Knowledge@Wharton, 2018) or “a sophisticated application of technology whereby a machine demonstrates human cognitive functions such as learning, analysis and problem solving” (Valin, 2018, p. 5). Artificial intelligence in PR is conceptualized as „technologies showing humanoid cognitive abilities and performing humanoid cognitive abilities and performing functions in undertaking public relations activities, independently or together with public relations practitioners” (Galloway&Swiatek, 2018, p. 735). Abdullah (2020) considers the world of public relations is now facing a revolution caused by AI and Big Data.

#### **Literature Review\*\***

As researchers pointed out, AI is already used for some activities in the PR and marketing sphere. For example, AI capabilities are used to collect data from consumer needs research, customer feedback or to assess the results of communication (Alawaad, 2021). AI is also used to manage and automate content on social media through tools such as Hootsuite, Tweetdeck, Sprout Social and similar or even to support decision making through tools such as Google Analytics or similar (Abdulah, 2020). Monitoring news media, social media, storytelling, and subscriber analysis, or workflow management systems are some other uses of AI in PR practices. The technologies are considered to be useful to help organizations to manage their reputations (ex. by sending alerts about negative stories the minute they appear), to engage in monitoring and processing enormous volumes of data in order to help organizations to anticipate potential issues that could affect their reputation. Some other AI applications in PR include posting responses on social media in real time for the client and managing the crisis, creating media lists, scheduling meetings and sending follow-up emails (Galloway&Swiatek, 2018, Panda, Upadhyay & Khandelwal, 2019).

AI applications are considered as an evolution to automate some tasks, but also to evaluate PR efforts. For some researchers, AI provides new opportunities in communications and marketing practices, just as the Internet did it a few decades earlier (Alawaad, 2021). Also, AI and Big Data are seen as an opportunity to better understand stakeholders and competitors and to optimize the performance of PR practitioners (Abdullah, 2020) or for its productive potential (Galloway&Swiatek, 2018). According to Panda et al (2019), mass personalization and customization using AI are improving the effectiveness of PR activities. Gouda, Biswal&Parween (2020) also consider that these technological advancements have strengthened PR in managing the reputation, promoting brand values or enhancing the online presence, and also in understanding consumer needs using Google Analytics or similar monitoring tools. According to Arief&Gysomo (2020), the impact of AI in public relations can provide positive value.

The AI capacity to process large amounts of data and information is rather seen as an advantage for PR practitioners even if it leads to a discourse about the automatization and robotization in the work of PR professionals. However, this entails fears and concerns about the future of the PR profession or about its redefinition as some of the tasks are being automated.

Scholars consider that one of the strengths of big data and AI technologies is that PR professionals can not only analyze and understand information but also predict some events that can occur in the future.

Apart from job losses and ethical issues, some other concerns are linked to the fear of machines controlling humans. Some of the PR professionals have developed AI anxiety, the fear of the stability and the capabilities of AI and they seem to be under pressure to unlearn old manual skills and learn new digital capabilities of AI (Panda et al, 2019). According to



		<p>Galloway&amp;Swiatek (2018), rather than becoming AI experts, PR practitioners need to use AI to offer PR solutions to clients. Some other concerns are related to privacy (because advertisers collect data for profiling consumers), to filter bubbles (which might force users to access extremely limited content) or to the substitution of human labor by AI.</p> <p>The Chartered Institute of Public Relations revealed that, although humans could think critically, some PR activities are threatened because AI can replace them. Arief&amp;Gustomo (2020) are rather optimistic about the future of the PR considering that the human aspect will still be needed in 5 years or even in the next ten years even if they will need to improve their abilities and practices by using tools with AI and Big data capabilities.</p> <p>Previously, our survey findings (Cusnir&amp;Nicola, 2023, Euprera Conference) revealed an extensive adoption of AI (73.5%) among Romanian PR professionals, with ChatGPT emerging as particularly favored with an overwhelming 91.6% using it. The satisfaction level was remarkably high, with 91.6% expressing contentment with AI application efficacy. While the overall attitude towards AI was optimistic, the perception was that AI-generated work does not currently match the quality of human-created content.</p> <p><b>Methodology and research design</b></p> <p>Our research questions are the following:</p> <p>RQ1: What is the PR professionals' perception towards AI tools?</p> <p>RQ2: What is their degree of satisfaction about using AI?</p> <p>RQ3: How do PR professionals perceive the ethics of using AI in their activities?</p> <p>RQ4: Which is the PR professionals' perception about the impact of the adoption of AI for their profession?</p> <p>For this study we used a qualitative approach, employing semi-structured interviews as the primary method for data collection. Through this approach, we aimed to comprehensively assess Romanian PR and Communication professionals' approach of AI in their activities.</p> <p>Our interviews contain 15 questions divided in four sections according to the following topics: the understanding of the "AI" concept, the adoption of AI, the personal and institutional perception about AI adoption, the degree of satisfaction about AI adoption and its impact on the PR and communication field. .</p> <p>The sample for our interviews included 16 PR Practitioners (n=16), from PR agencies, from private and state-owned companies, and freelancers, with a wide range of PR experience, from entry-level professionals to seasoned experts. Data were collected between December 2023 and January 2024.</p> <p><b>Findings (Expected)</b></p> <p>Expected findings will show how Communication professionals articulate and comprehend the AI concept, along with the primary associations they attribute to it. Additionally, we will explore the types of activities for which they deploy AI, the frequency of its use, their preferred tools, and the key advantages they perceive in utilizing AI. We are particularly interested to determine the satisfaction levels of communication professionals with AI usage, delving into the reasons behind their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. A particular section will map the stances of organizations and supervisors regarding the integration of AI into routine tasks. Professionals' responses will allow us to identify their degree of satisfaction about the AI use, if they consider AI as a threaten or rather as an opportunity for the industry and why. We will also focus on their perception of quilt (or no) in employing AI as well as their outlook on the future of AI within the communication profession.</p>
	Patrick Nehls (University of Bonn)	<b><i>Exploring the Relationship Between AI and Rituals in deeply mediatized societies</i></b>

		<p>The role of rituals in individualized societies has been a subject of scholarly debate for a long time (cf. Rothenbuhler, 1998; Rappaport, 1999; Grimes, 2006; Bell, 1997). Some researchers tend to attribute a decreasing relevance to rituals in deeply mediatized and individualized societies (cf. Stollberg-Rilinger, 2019), arguing that individual living environments, characterized by increased flexibility and mobility, have led to the erosion of traditional practices that once created a sense of community, meaning and togetherness (cf. Han, 2019). Mediatization processes, which involve the pervasive integration of media and communication technologies into everyday life, are seen as a driving force behind this shift (Walter, 2015, 229), as people are increasingly engaging in fragmented and individual communication environments, and physical co-presence is no longer considered a necessary criterion for experiencing social connectedness (cf. Papacharissi, 2016). However, it is essential to challenge this prevailing notion of a decline in rituals in mediatized societies. Instead, it appears that the practices that provide meaning and shape everyday life in these societies can often be described as media practices (cf. Couldry &amp; Hepp, 2017). In this regard, there is no loss of rituals, but rather a transformation in the nature of these practices. Building on an own study on digital mourning and grief, combining a social media analysis of Instagram (2700 posts with the #funeral) with guided interviews (N=7), the first part of the presentation will discuss the entanglements of digital media and rituals, showing that existing rituals are mediated, and sometimes even expanded through digital technologies in their temporal, spatial, or social perspectives (cf. Sumiala, 2019). Moreover, digital media themselves are evolving into a unique form of ritual that may not be directly comparable to traditional forms. The exploration will highlight the transformative role of media practices and their capacity to foster personal and collective meaning (cf. Hoondert &amp; van der Beek, 2019).</p> <p>As we move forward into an era of communicative artificial intelligence (cf. Guzman &amp; Lewis, 2019; Sundar, 2020), understanding these dynamics becomes even more crucial. The second part of the presentation will therefore reflect on the possible influences of artificial intelligence in sensitive areas such as mourning and problematize them using the example of the so-called digital afterlife industry (cf. Öhmann &amp; Floridi, 2018). By addressing various applications (chatbots, VR-simulations, holograms, social robots) that offer digital representations of the deceased as artificial companions (cf. von Scheve, 2014; Böhle &amp; Bopp, 2014), the analysis discusses the a) functional, b) relational, as well as c) metaphysical aspects of AI as communicator (Guzman &amp; Lewis, 2019, 75ff.) and problematizes possible entanglements of rituals of mourning and AI in the near future. While digital mourning provides a poignant example (cf. Morse &amp; Birnhack, 2022; Besser et al., 2023; Graikousi &amp; Sideri, 2020), the implications extend beyond grief, touching upon the relationship between humans and machines, privacy and data protection, and the formation and enactment of social relationships in times of AI (cf. Hepp et al., 2022).</p> <p>Even if the consequences of the use of AI in its social, cultural and societal perspectives cannot yet be described clearly enough, it makes sense to approach socio-technical developments not only retrospectively, but also prospectively (Schäfer &amp; Wessler, 2020, 308), keeping in mind that what a technology eventually turns out to be regarded as being and how it actually becomes embedded in (everyday) contexts of use is never determined by its technical design alone. Rather, its performative deployment always relates to the interplay of first-hand experiences and interpretation offers made available by others (Pfadenhauer &amp; Lehmann, 2021, 99).</p> <p>The third and last part of the presentation will hence discuss possibilities for theory formation and method development in times of deep mediatization and AI</p>
	Yannik Peters (University of Bonn)	<b><i>#EU – Analyzing the Mediatization of the European Public Sphere Using Structural Topic Modeling</i></b>

The mediatization and digital transformation is currently taking place at all levels of the public sphere. A key characteristic of the digital public sphere is its possibility of being transnational. Therefore, the digital transformation is closely related to the question of the constitution of a (digital) European public sphere, which is of great relevance for the further process and the success of European integration. This paper aims to systematically examine this interrelationship. Classically, the European public sphere has been characterized on the one hand as a unified, pan-European media public sphere. On the other hand, the Europeanization of national media publics was assumed (Gerhards 2001, Koopmanns/Erbe 2003). The digitalization of the public sphere calls these classic conceptions into question:

The network-like many-to-many communication structure on the internet (Castells 2008) contradicts the supposedly clear dichotomization of European and Europeanized public spheres. Moreover, the European public sphere was primarily understood as produced by the mass media. Digital public spheres, however, question the agenda-setting function of the mass media and enable multidimensional forms of produsage (Bruns 2008) or the active participation of users in the constitution of the public sphere. In this respect, digital European public spheres are also proving to be user-generated. This is a novelty, especially when one considers that even the critics of the much-cited European public sphere deficit have argued for the detachment of the public sphere and European citizens. Particularly in the case of the European public sphere, digitization can amount to a kind of revolution. Having said this, a digital European public sphere does not communicate in a neutral communication environment, but on the basis of platforms (van Dijck et al. 2018, Gillespie 2014). Facebook, Twitter and Co. structure and regulate, limit and delimit digital, transnational communication. AI technologies play an important role here, as they influence the way in which digital public spheres are formed in a transnational context (e.g. through social bots or the use of translation algorithms).

It is argued that digital public spheres can be understood as a multiplicity of overlapping event- and issue-centred mini-publics (Thimm 2016). Since digital communication in social media is of course not limited to European citizens, this study was especially interested in how Europeanized the topics and actors are within a particular sub-public. The empirical part of this paper therefore aims to provide evidence of a European (or EU-related) issue public sphere and to present it in terms of its structural form. On the basis of the academic research product track, all tweets of the hashtag #EU and #UE were collected for the year 2021 from the Twitter API using R. Whereas previous analyses have selected topic-centered hashtags such as #ThisIsACoup (Hänska/Bauchowitz 2019) or #TTIP (Ruiz-Soler et al. 2020) and generally evaluated them using network analysis, this paper deliberately chooses a different approach. Rather, the aim here is not to set the issue publics from the very beginning, but to capture them broadly and in their plurality. #EU and #UE are particularly suitable for this purpose. On the one hand, #EU and #UE can themselves be understood as issue publics. On the other hand, the actual use of the hashtag shows that the EU is often referred to or addressed as an actor in the tweets. In this way, the EU is specifically linked to other topics more as an actor than as a topic. It can therefore be assumed that these hashtags are used in tweets on diverse topics in the European context and should thus be most likely to be able to cover a cross-section of EU-related issue publics in a given time period. The collection of #EU and #UE is also recommended from a theoretical perspective. Tweets containing the #EU and #UE can be understood as acts of addressing the EU more or less directly. This in turn can be interpreted in terms of public sphere theory (Habermas 1998) as an attempt to influence the political center.

The dataset contains a total number of 4,085,921 tweets in 64 languages. STM (Structural Topic Modeling) was carried out for the English (2.405.446 Tweets), German (318.513 Tweets) and French data sets (258.641 Tweets), in order to model and to identify the issue publics constituted using #EU. STM is a topic modeling technique that goes beyond the most widely used

		<p>LDA, as it allows metavariables to be included in the analysis as well as correlations between topics (Roberts et al. 2019). In this analysis, time was also integrated as a metavariable. In this way, it is possible to map the distribution of topic prevalence over the entire year 2021. For all three datasets, models were computed for 20, 40, 60, and 80 topics. Based on the comparison of semantic coherence and exclusivity between the models, the solution with 40 topics was chosen for all three data sets. For content validation, both the most relevant words for the topic and documents were considered and evaluated by two researchers independently. Since the number of documents in these large data set is very high, the words were assigned a higher significance in the evaluation and interpretation than the individual documents.</p> <p>The role of AI is therefore of relevance here in two ways. On the one hand, as a research object, in terms of its role in the digital transformation. On the other hand, as a research method of unsupervised machine learning.</p> <p>The results of the English data set show that Europe-related topics are discussed in the digital sphere. These include Brexit, digitization, EU-membership and the EU member states, with a particular focus on Germany and France. At the same time, however, it is also clear that the transition from a European to a global issue public sphere is fluid. On the one hand, this means that it is not only Europeans who participate in the EU-related issue publics. This finding is supported by analysis of existing location data. On the other hand, non-European topics are also discussed under #EU and #UE. Here, the EU is addressed directly and called upon to take certain actions or to refrain from taking certain actions or political decisions. For example, Ethiopian citizens (loyal to the government) are calling on the EU not to implement sanctions against Ethiopia or Eritrea in the context of the Ethiopian civil war. The fact that this topic has the highest prevalence in the data set highlights the importance of non-European topics. The analysis of the German and French datasets showed that international topics were significantly less important here. At the same time, nationally specific discourses were evident, such as migration issues or the strong reference to the German EU president Ursula von der Leyen in the German data set. The results point to the importance of language bubbles in transnational discourses online.</p> <p>While the analog, nation-state public sphere was still too small to meet the demands of a unified European public sphere, the public sphere of digital platforms appears to be too global to meet the normative requirements of public sphere based on democratic theory (Ferree et al. 2002). This is because the public sphere is conceptualized with the state as the addressee and citizens (or mass media) as the producers of public communication. One could argue that the EU has always been in a dual role, on the one hand as a supranational state that influences the lifes of its citizens through political decisions. On the other hand, as a significant political actor in a global governance system that, in the absence of a world state, can be legitimately addressed in international affairs by people of the world society (see Fraser/Nash 2014). The digital transformation represents a huge change for the European public sphere in multiple respects, structurally and normatively, although the direction of this process is still open.</p>
14.30-16.15	<p><b>2.9 Journalism in Times of Crisis,</b>  <b>Chair: Krzysztof Wasilewski</b></p> <p>Room 1.132</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Kim Verhoeven (University of Antwerp); Steve Paulussen (University of</p>	<p><i>Fathoming the Force of Fact-Checks: A Systematic Literature Review on the Effectiveness of Journalistic Fact-Checks</i></p> <p><b>1. Introduction</b></p>

Antwerp); Gert-Jan de Bruijn  
(University of Antwerp)

In response to online misinformation, fact-checking has emerged as a new genre of journalism whereby claims made online are verified for correctness (Juneström, 2020). Summary evidence on fact-checking the claims made by politicians indicates that fact-checking is effective in correcting political misinformation, but the effects can be weakened by the formatting of the correction and by individual characteristics of the people exposed to a fact-check (Walter et al., 2020). Whereas previously, political statements were the most common topic being fact-checked by journalistic fact-checkers (Walter et al., 2020), nowadays, in general, journalistic fact-checkers focus more on fact-checking claims circulating online and on social media, representing a broader range of topics (Graves et al., 2023; Citation Omitted). This broader range of topics of the claims being fact-checked might also have influenced the effectiveness of journalistic fact-checking.

However, as no clear recent overview exists of the effectiveness of journalistic fact-checks in general, thus not focusing on political entities solely, this systematic review aims to summarize the existing empirical evidence on the association between journalistic fact-checks and their effectiveness on various topics and outcome variables (such as accuracy of beliefs, accuracy of knowledge, perceived trust/objectivity of claims and or news outlets, attitudes towards claims, and behavioral intentions), identify knowledge gaps, and provide recommendations for journalistic fact-checkers. Specifically, we focus on (1) whether providing a journalistic fact-check is more effective in combatting mis- and disinformation than not providing a journalistic fact-check at all, and (2) we investigate if certain journalistic fact-checks (i.e., regarding topic, style, and formatting) are more effective than others in combatting mis- and disinformation, leading to the following general research question: What is the effectiveness of (certain types of) journalistic fact-checks?

## **2 Method**

### **2.1 Literature Search**

A systematic literature search was performed on the 28th of March 2023 using Scopus, Web of Science, Communication Source (i.e., Communication & Mass Media Complete and Communication Abstracts together), and Sociological Abstracts, without language or publication date restrictions. A set of search terms was created in collaboration between the authors and an information specialist and was refined for each selected database. The set of search terms focused on the effectiveness of fact-checks and included associated terms such as "fact-check," "correction format," "correct," "effect," "impact," and "news." This review's full search strategy and protocol were registered at OSF ([https://osf.io/za8ps/?view\\_only=cc15cbc57b1d40f18faa41b24745d35b](https://osf.io/za8ps/?view_only=cc15cbc57b1d40f18faa41b24745d35b)).

### **2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

In the first phase (screening of title and abstract), studies had to have an experimental design to be included. Reviews, meta-analyses, and incomplete papers were excluded. In the second phase (full text-reading), included studies had to meet six criteria: (i) the presence of at least two experimental conditions, (ii) participants must be randomly assigned to experimental conditions, (iii) the fact-check/correction format should be manipulated (i.e., (a) rectification(s) of false information by an explicitly mentioned journalistic fact-checker or third-party fact-check organization (either existing or fictitious)), (iv) participants are only exposed to one experimental condition. In studies with a predetermined sequence of experiments, only the first experiment in the set was included to prevent exposure to multiple experimental conditions (i.e., Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). Also, (v) it should be explicitly stated that the dependent variable(s) must have been measured immediately after the first exposure to the fact-check manipulation. Papers that exposed participants to a random set of fact checks (e.g., Brashier et al., 2021) and only afterward assessed the fact-check outcome were excluded. Lastly, (vi) the first fact-check/correction format must be the same for everyone within the condition, and this should be explicitly stated (i.e., experiments with

randomization within the randomized condition and possible randomization within randomization are excluded (e.g., Mena, 2019).

The first and second authors established the screening procedures. The first author conducted the initial screening of articles (based on information in the title and abstract). The first and second authors reviewed conflicts; unresolved conflicts were discussed with the third author. An identical procedure was used for full-text screening, leading to 23 included articles and 34 independent experiments (see Figure 1 for the PRISMA Flow Diagram).

### **2.3 Data Extraction and Synthesis**

Data extraction was performed by the first author of this paper and reviewed by the second author to ensure completeness. The extracted information from the included studies, and where applicable, independent experiments, concerned the following elements: title, author, year, setting, topic, study design, experimental conditions, sample size, and outcomes. Outcomes investigated in multiple experiments were only synthesized in the results and not further analyzed through meta-analyses due to the heterogeneity of studies.

In this extended abstract, we specifically address the effectiveness of journalistic fact-checks in countering misinformation by focusing on topic differences, as we are still analyzing results. However, further analysis will include participant characteristics, claim nature (debunk versus claim-check), and fact-check style and format to formulate a more in-depth answer to our general research question.

### **3. Results**

Of the included 34 experiments, only 27 (79.4%) followed a true experimental design and have been included in this abstract. Among these 27, 19 experiments focused on fact-check presence as a predictor (70.4%). Politics and government was the main topic in 68.4% of these experiments (N = 13), followed by health in 21.1% (N = 4). The remaining experiments covered economics (N = 1), and environment and climate (N = 1). The majority (68.4%) were conducted in the US (N = 13), while 15.8% did not specify their location (N = 3). The others were conducted in Asia (N = 1), in Australia (N = 1), and in both the US and the Netherlands (N = 1). On average, each experiment had 604.16 participants (SD = 470.63), ranging from 122 to 1608 participants. Various outcome variables were assessed, which are discussed in the sections below.

#### **3.1 The Effectiveness of Exposure to Journalistic Fact-Checks**

Concerning political and governmental topics, mixed effects of being exposed to a fact-check were found. Regarding the claims assessment, only 50% of the experiments (N = 2) (Fridkin et al., 2015; Hameleers, 2022) found that people exposed to fact-checking rated incorrect information as less accurate than those who did not see the fact-check. However, Nyhan & Reifler (2010) found that a fact-check did not reduce overall misperceptions in their experiments (N = 2). Besides, the levels of trust and believability in false information were positively affected (thus decreased) after seeing a fact-check in 83.3% of the experiments (N = 5) (Carson et al., 2022; Jennings & Stroud, 2021; Thorson, 2016; Young et al., 2018; Wintersieck et al., 2021). However, another experiment by Jennings & Stroud (2021) showed no effect of exposure to a fact-check on the levels of trust and believability of false information (N = 1).

Regarding health, all three experiments that investigated credibility perceptions or attitudes towards (false) information found a significant positive effect of fact-checking (relative to no fact-checking), indicating that credibility perceptions of incorrect information decreased after seeing a fact-check or that attitudes towards correct information became more positive (Chung & Kim, 2021; Lee et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). In contrast, only one study investigated the effectiveness of fact-checking on health risk perception, but this study found no effects of exposure to a fact-check (Ho et al., 2022). Other

		<p>outcomes studied were misinformation engagement and vaccination intentions, but this study found no effects of exposure to a fact-check on both outcomes (Lee et al., 2023).</p> <p>Concerning the topics of economy, and environment and climate, only one experiment per topic investigated the effects of fact-checking on the investigated credibility perceptions of false information. Both experiments found a positive effect, as credibility perceptions of incorrect information decreased after seeing a fact-check (Chung &amp; Kim, 2021; Koch et al., 2022).</p> <p><b>4. Discussion and Conclusion</b></p> <p>In this extended abstract, we aimed to assess the effectiveness of journalistic fact-checks in combatting misinformation. Our preliminary findings indicate that journalistic fact-checking can effectively reduce the perceived accuracy of false claims and correct misconceptions, as earlier research regarding the effectiveness of fact-checking governmental and political claims already stated (Walter et al., 2020).</p> <p>However, experimental research on the impact of fact-checking in areas like health, economy, and environment and climate is limited, and even though the studies conducted in these domains are generally similar to the positive effects seen in political fact-checking experiments, specifically in terms of reducing the perceived credibility of false information (Walter et al., 2020), no significant changes in health risk perception, misinformation engagement, or vaccination intentions after fact-check exposure were found. As journalistic fact-checking expands beyond political and governmental topics nowadays (Graves et al., 2023; Citation Omitted), further experimental research is recommended to explore how fact-checks could affect not only attitudes but also engagement and intentions across diverse topics.</p> <p>As we plan to finish the data analysis phase in December 2023, we aim to provide general insights into the effectiveness of journalistic fact-checks, considering factors such as topic, style, and formatting, in combatting misinformation. Ultimately, we intend to answer the overarching research question: What is the effectiveness of (certain types of) journalistic fact-checks?</p>
	<p>Anna Jupowicz-Ginalska (University of Warsaw), Greta Gober (University of Warsaw)</p>	<p><b><i>Polish borders: media polarisation and the portrayal of refugee crises at the borders with Belarus (2021) and Ukraine (2022)</i></b></p> <p>In recent years, Poland's borders, as part of NATO and the EU, have drawn media attention twice: first, at the Belarus border in 2021, and then at the Ukraine border in 2022. The first one started in June 2021, was a result of the Lukashenko regime's policy aimed at destabilizing Eastern EU countries (Śliwa &amp; Olech, 2022). In response, Polish authorities tightened security measures, reinforcing border guards, and constructing a fence to prevent illegal border crossings. Pushbacks occurred, and people had no right to enter Poland or return to Belarus. Due to the declaration of a state of emergency, Polish media were restricted from freely visiting the borderlands, leading Belarus to control the narrative.</p> <p>Amid the ongoing Belarus border crisis, another crisis unfolded. In February 2022, Russia attacked Ukraine, leading to Poland becoming one of the primary destinations for Ukrainian refugees. Over 10 million people have crossed the border (Straż Graniczna, 2022). Poland responded by organizing charity fundraisers, converting public buildings into shelters, and establishing the border as a primary distribution point for humanitarian aid (ref?). The government adopted a special law to simplify the process of legalizing residency and providing financial support to the refugees.</p> <p>It can be observed that the Polish society and politicians approached these two crises differently. It is worth asking about the role of the media in this process.</p> <p>This presentation aims to investigate how selected media outlets presented the Belarus and Ukraine border crises within the context of media polarization. The primary focus is on refugees and the moments of border crossings, which are critical for capturing vivid reactions, emotions, and decisions. The authors use the media polarization theory to analyse the similarities</p>

and differences in media coverage and, based on this analysis, (re)create portrayals of the refugees in a polarized media landscape.

Głowacki and Kuś (2019) define MP as the reflection and reinforcement of diverse societal and political views, distinguishing between structural and behavioral levels of media operations. Trzaskowski (2015) characterizes MP as a "disproportion of information", where what is considered noteworthy in newspaper X may be entirely overlooked by its rival newspaper Y" (pp. 69-70). MP often correlates with media's political affiliations, contributing to biased reporting (Bębenek, 2019).

However, while there is extensive literature on media portrayal of refugees, the connection between refugees and MP, particularly within the context of borders, remains limited. Notable exceptions are Toneva (n.a.) who examines Macedonian media's coverage of the 2015 refugee crisis, noting its contribution to information chaos and occasional fear. Elliot and Brahim (2022) offer a broader perspective, highlighting how European media exploit migration for political purposes. Troszyński and El-Ghamari (2022) describe the Polish media's divided positions on migration between 2015-2018 where "the great divide" is rooted in pro- or antigovernmental attitudes. Koźdoń-Dębecka (2023) investigates MP during the Belarus border crisis, finding that media constructed different migrant images. Progovernment media portrayed men surrounded by armed services, labelling them 'illegal immigrants'. Anti-government media showed a more diverse picture, including women and children. Ociepka (2023) reveals differing pro-government media approaches to refugees from Belarus and Ukraine, with a more positive stance toward the latter. In summary, while the images of refugees' are explored in MP studies, there is room for further exploration, especially regarding the Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian borders.

This paper addresses these gaps by answering the following questions: 1) what is the media portrayal of refugees on these borders? and 2) what is the impact of structural MP on behavioural MP?

The authors conducted qualitative media content analysis, following Pisarek's (1983) research process, which included the following steps:

- using the theoretical framework of MP for the selection of media (structurally polarized weeklies were chosen: the liberal Polityka and conservative Sieci);
- choosing the research sample (10 issues of each magazine for each crisis: Polityka issues 34-44 in 2021 and 10-20 for 2022; Sieci issues 35-45 for 2021 and 9-19 for 2022; in total – 105 articles);
- coding category formation based on Mayring's (2014) Inductive Category Formation;
- qualitative content analysis.

The paper reveals that the structural level of MP is reflected in its behavioural level. Polityka maintains a critical stance towards the ruling right-wing coalition. It opposes policies such as border closures and the imposition of a state of emergency in the Belarusian crisis, while underscoring what it perceives as inadequate and short-sighted actions in response to the Ukrainian crisis. It criticizes the approach of law enforcement agencies, accusing them of bias against refugees. On the other hand, Sieci lends support to the measures implemented by the authorities. It provides justifications for the handling of the Belarusian crisis while displaying a more positive tone when discussing the Ukrainian crisis, thereby shaping the significance of the ruling coalition. The structural level of MP is most evident in the "biased reporting" evident within polarized media representations of refugees in both 2021 and 2022.

It can be stated that the main thematic axis of the MP is the crisis on the border with Belarus, the portrayal of which varies dramatically and is subordinated to political, social, and religious themes. The crisis on the border with Ukraine also contains



		<p>polarizing elements, focusing mainly on the affirmation or criticism of the authorities and on the highlighting or silence of uncomfortable and problematic issues.</p> <p>This presentation has limitations: it focuses on analysing selected texts from two periodicals, omitting other media. Examining the perspective of other means of communication, especially over a longer period, would undoubtedly provide a more comprehensive picture of polarization regarding refugees. Nevertheless, it undoubtedly constitutes a significant contribution to the theory of media polarization, addressing it also in relation to issues such as tolerance, inclusivity, and humanitarianism.</p>
	<p>Magdalena Mateja (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)</p>	<p><b><i>Risks, threats and... opportunities. War reporting from Ukraine as a factor in Polish journalists' professional development</i></b></p> <p>In every conflict, a journalist serving as a war correspondent dies, including: Polish television envoy Waldemar Milewicz, who was shot in Iraq in 2004, or AFP journalist Arman Soldin, who lost his life in 2023 from a Grad missile while reporting on the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>A journalist's involvement in war reporting was most often presented in the literature on the subject as a source of potential risks and threats, such as loss of health or life, exposure to post-traumatic stress disorder or consequences for personal life, mainly of emotional, psychological nature. In Poland, journalists who spoke openly about the mental and emotional consequences of reporting on the war were Wojciech Jagielski and Krzysztof Miller. Decisions made by correspondents or photojournalists to present an event in a way that violated socio-cultural taboos or threatened morality were sometimes met with ostracism and even destruction of the journalist's public image. Kevin Carter is an example of a photojournalist who was condemned by the journalistic community and public opinion for his piece of work.</p> <p>The presentation aims to present the benefits rather than the dangers of war reporting and can be seen as a new approach to Polish journalism, and at the same time somewhat controversial. The presentation proves that for some journalists, reporting on the war has become a turn in their career and a contribution to professional development. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022 caused Polish journalists to suspend their regular activities on an unprecedented scale and go to the war zone. In the first phase of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the war was covered by experienced correspondents and journalists working for the first time in the war zone, reporters and political publicists, freelancers and bloggers. Some of them gained popularity, which resulted in an increase in the number of publications and paid lectures and public appearances. Others, such as Marcin Lachowski, had raised funds on crowdfunding websites and began working as correspondents in other conflicts. Some freelancers signed a contract with an institutional medium and thus gained job security. Photojournalists who presented the topic of the war in Ukraine received journalism awards (e.g. Wojciech Grzędziński, Poland, freelancer; Evgeniy Maloletka, Ukraine, Associated Press), which is a source of profit but also causes respect in the media industry. The development of a personal brand may be important in the perspective of further cooperation with editorial offices and other agencies.</p> <p>The research problem of the presentation is the occupational safety of Polish correspondents during the war in Ukraine. There is an interdisciplinary issue that concerns the profession of a journalist and broadly understood occupational safety, which also includes the possibility of professional development and promotion. To sum up, the theoretical background of the considerations undertaken in this presentation are journalism studies, and the complementary context is the concept of occupational health and safety (issues of work organization, working conditions, personal development, professional qualifications, career planning and issues related to personal security).</p>

		<p>In connection with the above, research questions refer to (RQ1) the risks and threats for Polish journalists reporting on the war in Ukraine, (RQ2) the benefits of being eyewitnesses to the conflict and (RQ3) the benefits that institutional media have gained as a result of cooperation with Ukrainian war correspondents. The research results will be used to verify the hypothesis (H1) that performing the tasks of a war reporter can be a positive impulse for professional development for a journalist, and the advantages (H2) overcome the endangering in the case of Russia-Ukraine war correspondents in Poland. In order to obtain data for analysis, in-depth interviews are conducted with on-purpose selected Polish journalists who, after February 24, 2022, went to Ukraine to send correspondence to Poland directly from the attacked country. To obtain the broadest possible picture of the problem, this group includes reporters and publicists; press, radio and television journalists; institutional media employees and independent journalists presenting content on the Internet; full-time journalists and freelancers.</p> <p>Key words: journalist, war reporting, career development, Russia-Ukraine war, occupational safety</p>
14.30-16.15	<p><b>2.10 Re-defining the Notion of Human in a Digitally Rich Environment</b>  <b>Chair: Małgorzata Kisilowska-Szurminska</b>   Room 1.138</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p>
	<p>Ignas Kalpokas (Vytautas Magnus University)</p>	<p><b><i>Leaving Anthropocentrism Behind? The Need to Conceptualize Human-AI Enmeshment in Communication Practices</i></b></p> <p>With an ever-increasing role of digital technologies, and various AI-enabled tools and algorithmic governance mechanisms, today's communication environment has not only grown in terms of complexity but is also putting in question some of the often taken for granted assumptions about human-centricity in communication. Of course, to a large extent, such human-centricity remains intuitive: after all, intentionality and the capacity to generate and understand meaning within specific contexts are all central to communicative interactions. Simultaneously, though, as Jungherr and Schroeder (2023: 168-169) observe, AI tools now have significant sway over the public arena by way of shaping the information received by individuals (e.g. content selection and moderation), generating part of the content consumed by individuals, and even acting as communication partners, such as in the case of voice assistants. The crucial questions, however, revolve around the depth and kind of such technological participation.</p> <p>Interrelatedness and enmeshment as crucial features are also manifested in the structure of today's public arena, best understood in general terms as 'interconnected communicative spaces' (Jungherr and Schroeder 2023: 165). More precisely, should one attempt to break down the public, with Hasebring, Merten and Behre (2023: 83), into constellations of actors, frames of relevance, and communicative practices, it becomes clear that AI-enabled technological artefacts participates in all of them. They participate in publics alongside humans as both assistants and obstructors (bots could be an example of the latter), shape relevance by subterraneously structuring information supply, and take part in content generation and other practices that set frames for interaction. An even more fragmented and dynamic model is proposed by Bruns (2023: 79), whose focus is on communicative formations that are 'variously private and public, personal and topical, small and large, transient and persistent' that are 'connected both horizontally and vertically by shared participants and information flows'. Moreover, it is not just the internal dynamics and user practices of such formations that determine their fate: instead, a crucial</p>

role is played by ‘platform affordances, commercial and institutional interests, technological foundations, and regulatory frameworks’ (Bruns 2023: 79), clearly implying a constant flux that is simultaneously shaped internally and externally. Here, again, the triple role of digital artefacts – as moderators of online encounters with content (primarily on the platform affordances level), interlocutors (bots, conversational agents etc.), and content generators – comes to the fore. It thus should come as no surprise that in many ways, algorithms can function as partners in communication (see, notably, Esposito 2022: 1-2).

Notably, one could reasonably assert, with Hepp and Couldry (2023: 147), the emergence of the new normal in terms of ‘construction of reality with and through digital media and infrastructures’. The preceding is, of course, a very general assertion, covering the broad societal transformations that are taking shape vis-à-vis digital technologies. A crucial issue at hand, though, is whether one can meaningfully discuss human-AI partnership in communication without the advent of Artificial General Intelligence. An interesting and useful perspective to this effect is offered by Esposito (2022) who reframes the question from one concerning Artificial Intelligence to one concerning artificial communication, for her, it is not imitation of human intelligence (which remains elusive) but reproduction of communication skills that matters. In this way, a fundamentally interactive model emerges: one of enmeshment between human-generated data, machine learning processes, and communicative practices.

The preceding precludes rather one-sided assertions of loss of human agency and emergence of ‘algorithm dependency’ (see e.g. Schaetz et al. 2023), pointing instead towards mutual dependence. Indeed, when engaging with AI-enabled tools, the crux of the matter ‘is not that a human would interact with the material vis-à-vis a machine, but with systems that generate their communication based on a variety of human digital traces’ (Couldry and Hepp 2023: 146). The process, nevertheless, is interactive: an AI tool would reflect the perspective of human actors as an aggregate but always with a twist – a perspective that enables such tools to interact with humans not by simply parroting them but by producing an outcomes that strikes a balance between recognisability and surprise; such outcomes, in turn, then become a source of human interaction and learning, thus informing future interactive outcomes (see, generally, Esposito 2022: 15-16). Once again, interrelatedness and enmeshment are evident. The environment thus produced ‘follows users’ choices, then processes and multiplies them, and then re-presents them in a form that requires new choices’, resulting in a combination of mutual activity and passivity (Esposito 2022:64). In other words, AI-enabled tools react to and around humans (AI passivity) but do so in ways that externally structure the conditions for human behaviours and responses (human passivity).

Still, however, one might posit that there is a crucial difference in terms of the agency of digital artefacts being, at best, conditioned by humans or, perhaps, even illusory only. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the centrality and independence of human agency has also come under intense questioning in recent years. Notably, today’s increasingly digital-first life means that the nature of the human self, let alone its supposedly autonomous qualities, is increasingly problematised, distributed among multiple data doubles – ‘decorporealised’ virtual individuals residing within technology (Hepp 2020: 159). The ensuing ‘human-data assemblages’ are in a constant state of flux ‘as humans move through their everyday worlds, coming to contact with things such as mobile and wearable devices, online software, apps and sensor-embedded environments’ (Lupton and Watson 2020: 4), conditioning them and being conditioned in return. It thus becomes evident that subjectivity and agency cannot be understood as autonomous qualities describable in binary terms (as either present or absent) but, instead, as in-between states (Braidotti 2019a: 33; see also Käll 2023: 5-6). The exceptionality of the human subject is, consequently, put in question, leading to indeterminacy between human and non-human (Lupton 2020: 17) or, at the very least, their significant

		<p>interrelationship and enmeshment. Crucially, then, one must acknowledge that ‘not only humans but also non-humans [...] have agentic and performative capacities’ (Monforte 2018: 380), resulting in shared capacities that are ‘more-than-human’ (Lupton 2020: 14). It indeed transpires that instead of the rational-autonomous ideal, ‘[w]e are relational beings, defined by the capacity to affect and be affected’, constantly ‘flowing in a web of relations with human and non-human others’ (Braidotti 2019b: 45, 47). Consequently, agency would thus be found in an ‘interplay of human capabilities and the capacities of more or less smart machines’ (Pentzhold and Bischof 2019: 3). One should, therefore, talk not of an increase or diminution of agency on either side of the human-AI encounter but, instead, of complex and dynamic networks of agency.</p> <p>The above view is also supported by neuroscientific research that reveals an autonomous unified self to be merely an illusory unity brought together out of diverse elements: multiple interacting neural networks, multiple social interactions, and multiple artefacts encountered at any given moment (Oliver 2020: 96). Hence, even the workings of the human brain are best seen as an endless exercise in improvisation at the interplay between the external world and the memories of past thoughts and experiences rather than some manifestation of ‘a hidden inner world of knowledge, beliefs, and motives’ (Charter 2019: 9). Seen in this way, the relationship of being shaped by any encounter at hand and shaping the environment back through interpretation and reaction to such encounter (instead of an autonomous human proceeding in a linear manner) has not even emerged through interactions with technology but is, simply, a natural feature. Thus understood, humans are merely entities constantly scrambling for meaning and, therefore, undergoing a constant process of re-invention, rather than self-sufficient actors, exerting power and dominance over their environments. In other words, the vestiges of anthropocentrism must be replaced with a realisation of enmeshment with the rest of the world (Oliver 2020: 241). Again moving into the technological domain, then, the aim should be to move ‘beyond the competition narrative about humans and machines’ (Coeckelbergh 2020: 42). Likewise, as noted by Hepp and Couldry (2023: 147), albeit in a way that that is overly loaded with temporal exceptionality, ‘[s]imple dualisms hardly help at this point, especially if we want to analyse the complexities of deeply mediated societies’. Overall, the goal should be to overcome binary thinking, instead aiming for an approach that would posit interactivity between humans and their environment as the default condition of communicative interactions.</p> <p>Overall, then, while the growing role of AI and algorithmic tools in communication has become a truism, it is now time to take one step further to shed away previous anthropocentric assumptions by positing horizontal interrelationship and enmeshment between humans and digital artefacts. On the one hand, this is due to the growing role and capacities of digital artefacts as structuring actors, interlocutors, and content co-generators; on the other hand, this is also due to autonomous human agency, traditionally taken for granted, emerging as, at best, an overstretch. In combination, a new, enmeshed and anti-anthropocentric, take in communication is necessary.</p>
	<p>Monika Sońta (Kozminski University); Monika Czechowska</p>	<p><b><i>Organizational Communication Trends in Europe: Navigating the Tech-Human Balance in the Age of AI</i></b>  Keywords: Organizational Communication, Communication Trends, Change Communication, Tech-driven changes, Corporate Communications</p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The objective of this study is to identify key challenges related to communication in the age of Artificial Intelligence and poli- and permacrisis as the central category of discussion. We assume that the way to manage this complex and uncertain reality is through getting orientation in the communication landscape and reacting by designing the most promising scenarios. Furthermore, the goal is to create the positioning map of the future direction of Organizational Communication development in European organizations, which can be adopted in the public as well as the private domain.</p>

In other words, the goal of this study is to propose a taxonomy of communication trends, positioning them conceptually using scenario thinking and generating future directions. The research stands out for its European perspective, impacted by the Ukraine war, and its dual examination through the eyes of digital-native students as well as experienced communication professionals.

The basic definition of a trend based on Britannica is a general direction of change:

a way of behaving, proceeding, etc., that is developing and becoming more common or something that is currently popular or fashionable. For this research, the key terms will be defined with a focus on European perspectives of communications based on the academic practice where “[a] trend describes developments which are predicted to unfold over several years and have a more lasting impact than short-lived fashions and hypes (Communication Trends Radar 2023, European Communication Monitor).

We will focus on the European Union reporting as the data comes from the EU reports or the leading high education institution that analyses communication from corporate, strategic, internal, and change management perspectives. We exclude Marketing Communication or Science Communication as we focus solely on Organisational Communication.

#### **Research design and initial directions of findings**

In the first part of the research, we will use a desk research method and focus on a literature review from February 2022 (after the outbreak of war in the Ukraine) by January 2024. We choose as a range for analysis academic publications on Organisational and Strategic Communication after this date, plus we also include a thematic analysis of business perspective by analysis of European corporate communication associations reports for 2022 and 2023.

For the second part of the research, we decided to use various creative conversational frameworks like creative workshops, surveys, and interviews. In this way, we want to make sure that we cover the perspective of different generations and people with various work and technology experiences.

Our first target group is students of undergraduate programs related to AI at Kozminski University. We asked them to identify trends in corporate communication and knowledge management. The question was asked either through workshops (14 focus groups) or brief surveys (108 responses). They were also asked to prepare the thematic analysis infographics about Communication Trends that were one of the assignments from the “Communication in the Age of AI” course conducted by the authors of this paper. This way from November 2023 to January 2024. we gathered 48 infographics representing their point of view. The first preliminary interpretation of data goes in the direction of:

- There are two dimensions of interpretations: the Tech-driven perspective with a focus on the practical usage and mainstreaming tools such as VR, AR, bots, physical robots, and IoT to the everyday practices in the organizations and the Human Side of the change management associated mainly with tech-savviness of the employees with the Human Resources Management in various phases of digital transformations.

- Human Enablement Technologies and parallel work as the main reflexive concept versus technological gadgets in organizations that make the work of humans smarter and faster.

- Dealing with fear and being overwhelmed by technology through cooperation and communities.

- Democratization of technology in the organizations – more advanced technological tools (AGI, low code and no code platforms, community building tools are going into cost-efficient mainstream)

- The importance of social learning experiences with tangible results (creation of the artifacts, the feeling of being empowered when you create something, for example: a prototype, collage...)

·Need for minimalistic solutions / technological shortcuts and the urgent need to apply digital critical thinking when building argumentation around Communication Trend interpretations.

After this initial, exploratory part of the research, we will confront (as this part is scheduled for January 2024) those answers with business reality and will ask business leaders who are corporate communication experts (Knowledge Managers, Communication Managers, Public Relations Managers, Change Communication Managers) to comment on our initial list of trends and test the drafted positioning map, to make sure that it is relevant to the business landscape. This part will take the form of six semi-structured in-depth interviews about their vision of Communication trends in times of generative AI. We designed the interview scenario in this way that we aim to receive dimensions and a draft of the future perspectives from the Communication Experts. The profile of interviews is carefully selected – we invited experienced managers who have more than six years of experience in Communication roles in a corporate environment.

The multidimensionality of this research refers to asking the same questions:

1. What are the communication trends in organisations?
2. What are the directions of organizational communication development?
3. What are the main challenges for corporate communication?
4. What technology can have the biggest impact on corporate communication?

by using multiple methods and approaches: creative workshops, surveys, and conversations with the projective techniques.

After the final thematic analysis of gathered data, the authors will try to propose the dimensions, and taxonomy of communication trends. Our discussion is not only based on the categorization of the Communication Trends, but we want to position those trends conceptually using the scenario thinking methods and generating four future scenarios, treating the insight from the research as data points that reflect weak signals in trend hunting (Cool Hunting). This approach will be embedded in our research from the moment of in-depth interviews as we will use projective techniques when we interview the experts. We see this approach as valid according to ‘the IDEA model’ which stands for Identifying and diagnosing, Deciding, Executing, and Assessing while exploring the first part of the model, namely “Identifying” (Gutierrez-Garcia & Recalde, 2016, p. 252).

#### **Originality**

The originality of the research is related firstly to the European perspective of Communication Trends with the observable changes due to the war in Ukraine that influenced organizational communication. Secondly, we cover the perspective of young people who are university students and so-called digital natives who interpret the business reality from a tech-oriented perspective, and we compare their view of communication systems with the perspective of experienced professionals in the field of communication.

#### **Limitations**

As we are talking about two years of analysis of the overview of communication trends and practices, we can assume that some trends have not been established well enough to assess their long-term importance and impact on future directions. Secondly, the situation is fragile and highly disputable, and we should take into consideration that the narrative around communication can be the subject of political and business power play. To neutralize this perception, we focus on the map with the positioning of communication trends together with future directions based on the descriptive, neutrally described dimensions and other notions.

Implications for Managers

		<p>The practical output of this research will include a map of communicative trends divided into thematic categories to help the managers get orientation, dimensions, and categories in the world of communication and organize and design their organizational communication activities more mindfully.</p> <p><b>Further perspectives</b></p> <p>The perspective we take in this research is Europe-centric. Further actions should involve comparison and extension of the finding to the U.S.-centric perspective and in the next steps the Asian, especially Chinese view on corporate communication trends should be covered to enrich the picture of organisational communication landscape.</p>
Paweł Zalewski (University of Warsaw)		<p><b><i>The crisis of digital education among young adults? Insights from the narratives on digital capital accumulation</i></b></p> <p>Despite reporting higher internet usage compared to other age groups, young adults demonstrate variations in their levels of digital competence. This discrepancy is particularly pronounced in Poland, where Eurostat (2022) indicates that almost all Polish individuals aged 16-29 claim to use the internet daily. However, only up to 67.5% of them possess basic digital skills, implying that a significant portion of Polish young adults may not fully capitalize on their frequent internet engagement. Some researchers and commentators argue that this situation reflects a crisis in the digital education of young people, especially given the prevalence of internet disinformation materials that require critical verification — a skill that young adults are believed to lack significantly (Eynon &amp; Malmberg, 2012; Banaji et al., 2018; Livingstone et al., 2019; van Dijk, 2020; Eynon, 2021). Understanding why digital education for Polish young adults has encountered such challenges is not a straightforward endeavour. I propose that the answer to this question may lie in the narratives of young adults themselves regarding their accumulation of digital capital – the concept that encompasses their strategies and methods for obtaining material access to digital technology and the skills necessary for efficient use across various personal, public, and professional contexts (Ragnedda &amp; Ruiu, 2020; Calderón-Gomez, 2021). To explore this issue, I conducted 25 biographical interviews with young adults aged 23-29 using Biographical-Narrative Interview Method (BNIM) (Wengraf, 2020), with a particular focus on technological socialization and the development of digital knowledge. The paper discusses preliminary results of my doctoral research project, regarding digital capital accumulation through digital socialization in young adults. Through my project, I aim to locate lived experience of young adults in wider sociocultural discourse about digital ubiquity and digital skills. In this paper, I will present three life stories from three participants to illuminate the commonalities and distinctions in their approaches to appropriating digital technologies throughout their lives. The results will highlight the disparities in digital education among young adults from varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Findings suggest that individuals with a higher socioeconomic status (SES) tend to employ their digital capital more deliberately, aiming to gain social advantages, such as engaging in more learning activities. Conversely, those with a lower SES often report more limited utilization of their digital capital, primarily for recreational purposes. However, all participants describe their processes of digital capital accumulation, which the data suggests may be linked to their educational and career trajectories, involving tensions between structural factors (referred to as "field" in Pierre Bourdieu's terminology) and individual capacities (habitus) (Bourdieu, 1986; 2021). Adopting the framework proposed by Allmann and Blank (2021), I posit that educational policy may require a new theory of digital skills to elucidate how young people acquire digital knowledge and whether they can effectively apply it in contexts aligned with their specific needs.</p>

	<p>Ana Jovanovic-Harrington (Dublin City University)</p>	<p><b><i>Sounding the Alarm: Unveiling the Surveillance Potential of Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior in Serbia</i></b></p> <p>As the most recent medium of communication, the internet ushered in new arenas for public discourse. As internet accessibility increased, users and digital-native companies developed distinct relationships that profoundly transformed societies and economies. Today, internet users are concentrated on a small percentage of websites, also known as platforms, owned by a handful of companies providing specific services.</p> <p>For instance, the most visited website in 2023 is Google, and it drives 93% of global internet traffic (Haan, 2023). Due to the high concentration of users and visitors, these platforms penetrate every aspect of day-to-day life in a process called platformization (Poel et al., 2019). Nevertheless, platform users are not only customers but also citizens who come to rely on such services to perform their civic duties, namely information seeking (Van Dijk et al., 2019).</p> <p>New and old societal issues are blending in this complex web of power struggles. Platformisation coincided with another global trend, the third wave of autocratisation. Regime changes come and go in waves, as proposed by Huntington (1991). When one regime category outnumbers the other, it is called a wave of democratization or autocratization. Huntington counted three waves of democratization since 1828, and two waves of reversals or autocratization by 1991, the last of which ended in 1975. Today, autocracies outnumber democracies (V-Dem, 2023), meaning we are amidst a third wave of autocratization.</p> <p>One of the most dramatic cases of democratic reversal in the past decade was Serbia, which, along with Hungary, is the first liberal democracy in the world to break down (V-Dem, 2020; Maerz et al., 2020, p.915). Although it is widely recognized that platforms can amplify misinformation, which can be detrimental to democracies, there are no reliable methods to measure cause and effect (Giglietto et al., 2020). For this reason, this paper does not aim to find a correlation between democratic decline and platforms but to showcase novel tactics modern authoritarian regimes use in these spaces.</p> <p>Specifically, this paper will showcase how government-sanctioned coordinated inauthentic behavior can be transformed into a semi-automated informal surveillance apparatus in modern autocracies, as demonstrated by the Serbian case. The first accounts of SNS (Srpska Napredna Stranka or Serbian Progressive Party) social media bots appeared in 2014 as a botnet-type malware that marks and spams comment sections of critical news outlets. Over the course of the decade, the network evolved, and the latest rendition is believed to contain a section where individuals, such as NGO workers, activists, critical journalists, and others, are tracked online.</p> <p>To understand the type of social media bots present, we must distinguish between how and why such content is generated. Then, we must define the structure of these networks, as coordination comes in many shapes and forms. Lastly, the paper will delve into the synergy between coordinated inauthentic behavior and more conventional tools of authoritarian regime survival.</p>
<p>16.15</p>	<p><b>Conference Closing (Auditorium)</b> <b>Closing remarks: Tomasz Gackowski</b></p>	
<p>19.00</p>	<p><b>Informal evening, Warsaw Brewery Restaurant &amp; Bar (Browar Warszawski), 2 Haberbuscha i Schielego St.</b></p>	